

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY



JAMES A.
WICKERSHAM

30¢

Enoch Willoughby

Enoch Willoughby

A Novel

By

James A. Wickersham

New York
Charles Scribner's Sons
1900

COPYRIGHT, 1900, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

SRLF
URL

019004

To

MY FATHER

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE WILLOUGHBYS	1
II. THE O'MARAS	12
III. PROSPERITY	19
IV. THE CLOSED BOOK	25
V. THE VISION	37
VI. A FOLLOWER OF A FOLLOWER	49
VII. IN THE MEETING-HOUSE	58
VIII. "WILLIAM OLNEY"	66
IX. THE VISIT HOME	73
X. THE WOMAN PREACHER	78
XI. THE PRICE VISIT	96

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XII. FACING IT OUT	113
XIII. PEACE TO OLD LADY MARGARET'S ASHES !	136 .
XIV. ENOCH TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE .	152
XV. LYDDIE DECEIVES HERSELF . . .	170
XVI. THE NEW SECT	177
XVII. RELIGION HELPING LOVE	190
XVIII. WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND	205
XIX. TIME AND AFFECTION AGAINST REA- SON	218
XX. THE BETROTHAL	231
XXI. DEVELOPMENTS	251
XXII. THE VISIT FROM LITTLE JAMES .	263
XXIII. A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE . .	273
XXIV. SOME SEPARATIONS	286

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXV. THE "RESERVE"	306
XXVI. A DAY ON BIG STRANGER . .	318
XXVII. THE INCIDENT OF THE CHILD .	330
XXVIII. THE MIRACLE	338
XXIX. CONCLUSION	353

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

I

THE WILLOUGHBYS

You probably would not find one of the Willoughbys who did not have something peculiar about him. This peculiarity used to be spoken of as "queer;" and the "Willoughby 'queer,'" in all branches of the family, was a term in common use. And yet there was no well-defined quality meant by it. Sometimes it referred merely to outward peculiarities, a manner of expression; a tone of voice; a style of living or dress or action; but however indefinite it might be, whether tangible or intangible, palpable or impalpable, the quality was sure to be found in every Willoughby; and if you knew how, you could search it out and describe it.

It is not quite true that it was found in every Willoughby either, for there was one branch of the family that had, for some reason or other, assumed the name when they had no right to it; and, being rather prolific, this branch finally

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

came to have an influence in determining the family character, but of course not its true character. These were false Willoughbys, and not at all to be reckoned in with the rest. If any one should ever run across a Willoughby, then, who has not the characteristic of queerness, he may set him down at once as one of those spurious Willoughbys.

I wish it were possible to write down all the instances of this queerness that could be found. They would certainly be interesting; but such a record would be altogether too far-reaching. There was David Willoughby, the surveyor and mathematician, who had that peculiar drawl in his voice, and who always managed to conceal under it a very dry wit; but he was an unbeliever and an atheist, and no one would be likely to care much about him.

Then there was Thomas Willoughby, the artist, who lived apart from his wife in his old age, and was a kind of atheistical spiritualist, if such a combination is possible; a man a little cynical in expression, with a fine feeling for color, who painted very beautiful portraits in oil; one in particular of an old Quaker lady, probably his mother—I am not sure; at any rate it was much admired. Thomas used to believe in the presence of spirits, and generally kept two revolvers in his bed, most likely to keep the spirits away, for he had no money to lose and

THE WILLOUGHBYS

could not have been afraid of earthly robbers. He was a very singular Willoughby; learned, atheistical, solitary. One could write a whole story about him alone, but we shall have nothing more to say of him. He came of a very different branch from the Enoch Willoughbys whom we have to consider. The State school superintendent, James Willoughby, was a cousin of his.

Thomas had a wealthy sister, who remained all her life unmarried, and devoted her wealth and services to spiritualism. I believe she founded something like an asylum for impecunious and superannuated spiritualists. She had a notion that they ought not to have any church, and so would not found or endow one. She thought if they had formed themselves into churches immediately a creed would be formulated, the spirit would then begin to die out, and pretty soon you would have nothing.

I do not believe you could find one of this family who had not some opinion or other about religion. There were a good many atheists, and unbelievers of various kinds, but an equally great number of religious enthusiasts, reformers, and so on. A genuine man of the world, simple, plain, with no opinion on anything but business, or perhaps business and politics, you would hardly find among them. The nearest approach to it was, most likely, old Enoch Willoughby of Ohio.

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Before going on to speak of him, it ought to be stated here that we never knew a Willoughby who was a tramp or a beggar, nor did we ever know of one who became really rich. There was one who was rich, it is true: I can not say just how many millions he owned, but he was a millionaire, and, moreover, had no great peculiarities. In a word, it is easy to see he was one of those spurious Willoughbys and so does not count. The whole family always kept along that line of respectable mediocrity in wealth which is said to be conducive to the greatest happiness. As a rule they knew how to furnish labor for themselves, to economize, and live within their means; and whether you found them in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, or even Iowa or Kansas, you would be pretty sure to find them of the respectable, well-to-do sort.

Old Enoch Willoughby was a Quaker, as all the Willoughbys had been originally, and of the orthodox variety; though he insisted on remaining on good terms with the Hixites all his life, consistently with his doctrine of peace-making, which he professed and believed in more perhaps than in any religion or other doctrine under the sun. He was a tall, slender man, over six feet in height, and away back of our story, for he is only the father, or maybe the grandfather, of the particular Willoughbys of this history.

THE WILLOUGHBYS

His wife, Margaret, was large, and ruddy-faced, vigorous, and sturdy ; and if, at this time, there had been any tendency in the original stock of queerness to degenerate and die out, she would have reinoculated it, surely ; for she was the woman who had that water-witching power which is, and was with her, a real power. She was the woman they used to blindfold, and lead across a covered ditch, with the forked willow twig in her hands ; and she would tell where the water was every time ; but that was only a small part of her peculiarities. She was strong in more ways than one. She was known all over the country for her services in sickness ; and when in her prime could go out to the barn in the middle of the night, saddle a colt at the call of some one in distress, and ride ten or a dozen miles to wait on a sick person. She was not afraid of anything along the way, not even of the Gurneyville graveyard ; for she had enough belief in the existence of an invisible world, and confidence in her acquaintance with its character, to think she could have gotten along with its inhabitants in the dark as well as was necessary.

Margaret Willoughby was a rare woman, but she had her faults along with the rest of us. She could scold dreadfully at times, and if old Enoch Willoughby had been of a mind to pay any attention to her then she might have made

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

his life miserable ; but he had a happy faculty of living in an independent way to himself, or wrapped up in his own thoughts and ideas, so that her fretfulness did not greatly disturb the even tenor of his way.

When Enoch P. Willoughby—the P. was simply put in to distinguish the young man from his father, as if it took the place of a Jr. attached to the name—brought his young wife to live at his father's, the grandfather—that is, Enoch Willoughby, Sr.—attempted to forestall some anticipated trouble, and took the young woman, who was greatly pleased with her father-in-law, aside, and said to her :

“Now, Hannah, if thee will not pay too much attention to what mother says, we shall get along peacefully, and have a little heaven upon earth ; but if thee does pay attention to what she says, why, we shall have a little of the other place here, I'm afraid.”

Now, there were some eight or ten children of this family. Enoch P., whom we shall call simply Enoch, was the youngest ; and as he had not very much to do with, it seemed in every way best that he and Hannah O'Mara should live at his father's.

This arrangement, like so many other similar ones before it, did not turn out well ; and after a few years, young Enoch and his wife migrated, as so many hundreds of others did, from Ohio

THE WILLOUGHBYS

to Indiana, then to Iowa and Minnesota, and from there, finding the winters too cold, south, through Iowa and Nebraska, to Kansas, where they finally settled on the Reserve, as we shall learn. This must have taken in all about sixteen or seventeen years, for their oldest boy, James, had that age when they came to the Reserve, and had been born in the old home in Ohio.

The brothers and sisters of Enoch Willoughby had settled in various places. One had become a physician in eastern Indiana. Two others had gone farther West. One of these settled in Iowa, where he came nearest of all the younger generations to becoming a rich man; he also became one of the most peculiar, but peculiar in those little, outward things—actions, style of dress, style of house, and so on—that make only eccentricities, and do not bear very complete description. Two sisters remained in Ohio; but one of them died early in life by some accident, and left two children, who, of course, did not bear the family name, but did bring forth the fruit of the family, for they were of the same quality of queerness.

The oldest sister had fewest of the family characteristics, for there were no special peculiarities related of her. She was more like old Enoch Willoughby, her father, who had had that peace-making, quiet disposition. She was

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

a beautiful Quaker lady in her old age; a good model for that portrait which Thomas Willoughby, of the other family, had painted. In fact, she was the only one who had a good enough temper to put up with the irascibility of old Margaret Willoughby in her last years, and to her fell the task of taking care of the old lady.

All the other children were so glad of the opportunity of getting rid of this task that they renounced willingly their right to any inheritance in the estate of Enoch Willoughby, Sr., gave quit-claims, and turned it all over to Annie for taking care of their mother.

Strong characters are almost always the worst in old age, and grandmother Willoughby was really pretty bad. There was nothing to suit her. If she had had ten willing slaves at her constant command, she could have kept them all busy attending to her wants, and yet Aunt Annie managed, sweetly and gently, but forcibly, to take care of her to the satisfaction of her brothers and sisters. It may be she was thus kept too busy to develop the proper amount of peculiarity in herself. She never seemed to me to be a genuine Willoughby; but then, I did not know her very well.

The other sister—for there were three of the sisters—went West too, and pursued more nearly the course of her younger brother, Enoch, than

THE WILLOUGHBYS

any of the rest did. She was the most spiritually minded of them all. She used to speak in the Quaker meeting, and it was thought for a time she would become a Quaker preacher. But finally she found in herself the same magic power, if one can call it so, that her mother, Margaret, possessed, only to a still greater degree. She had a wonderful personal magnetism, and could find water by water-witching with willow twigs; and she had the gift of magnetic healing also.

She finally became a full-blooded spiritualist, but of the Biblical, Quaker variety. She left the church in her old age after a long trial and conviction for heresy, but left it entirely without resentment. She was a good woman always; with a sweet voice, and a spirituality that touched the soul only, and never ran away into trances or mediumship or materialization or anything of that kind; the development of her subconsciousness was very great, and she lived in a Biblical world of dreams and visions and their interpretation that was rather beautiful than anything else. She brought up a large family too, and was loved by her husband and all her children, and was independent enough to live a happy, religious life, in spite of the fact that she had been disowned by the church. She always remained the dearest recollection of young Enoch Willoughby. He always spoke of his sister Sarah a little as one would speak

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

of the New Jerusalem. There was for him something heavenly about her; and perhaps no incident in his life had made a stronger impression upon him than one visit with her. It was then that he was cured by her of that pain in his breast without his even speaking to her at all of the pain. She came up to him, laid her hand on his breast, and described the pain he felt there; and it ceased before he had even spoken to her.

These two always felt they would have liked to live near one another, and yet they never saw each other after those early days in Ohio but that time when Sarah cured Enoch of the pain in the breast.

Now, I want to be sure, before coming on down to describe Enoch Willoughby himself, that I have told all that is necessary about the rest of the family.

There was still another brother, James, who remained in Ohio, and also another brother, John, who went West with Enoch. John Willoughby, too, will probably appear again in this history; but outside of these, I think we have them all. They were all inclined to be high-minded. As a rule they were not politicians or seekers after offices. Occasionally school teachers would crop out among them, but generally they remained always private citizens, such as I have described them.

THE WILLOUGHBYS

Certainly the fact of their sturdy economy and general well-to-do-ness could not be too much dwelt upon. Some of them were even rather close in money matters, and wherever you found them, and whatever you found them, as a rule, they were pretty sure to be rather carefully looking after their material interests.

There was another thing about them: they were of English origin and rather proud of it. Old Enoch's father, John, had lived in western Pennsylvania; and his father, whose name I have forgotten, had lived in Philadelphia, and had had in his possession some documents, title deeds, and abstracts, executed to his father, William Willoughby, by William Penn. Of course, many people, in this latitude, traced their origin to Penn or his times, and old Willoughby was no exception to this custom. The habit passed down in the family to Enoch and Enoch P. It seemed a perfectly harmless habit, and if it was able to lend additional dignity to any one of them, it certainly was as cheap a method of attaining dignity as could be found.

II

THE O'MARAS

JUST as the prevailing characteristic of the Willoughbys had been queerness so that of the O'Maras was clear and distinct, and hard to name. Theirs was a large family, too, with some Welsh blood, and perhaps that accounts for it. This family had begun to decline, or began about the time our story commences. The reason for this decline seemed to lie in the easy temper and yielding disposition with which they were endowed. The whole family never produced a political or religious reformer or bigot in its entire history in America. On the other hand, the number of minor poets and actors, singers, and small orators in the family was abnormally great.

At this time in its history, when the period of religious conversion came upon the various members of the O'Mara family, they were quite apt to go to the dogs in some way or other. Instead of becoming eccentric and finding their wills and purposes strengthened, they gave up ; waited on the Lord to do everything for them ; and frequently found themselves unattended by

THE O'MARAS

him to any great length. They were inclined to be hopeless, and so, as a rule, were not religious. Out of this fundamental disposition impressionable characters were developed, who were easily influenced by their surroundings. They became popular; and you might expect a great number of a family such as this to occupy public positions, but never to leave a great impression on the public mind. The religious character is the only one that is really strong and enduring, whether for good or bad, and the family could not be called religious.

Of Hannah's four sisters, the youngest, Lyddie, was, in her early years, impressionable enough almost to have become a second Joan of Arc; the sweetest girl; of most tender nature; eyes like a fawn, and a spirituality that shone in her every look.

She came near marrying the first man that presented himself, as we shall see, and, had she done so, would have lived a life of hardship as a drunkard's wife ever afterward, though always happy, loving, and sweet, I am sure.

The oldest sister was that one who eventually became a kind of crone, and spent her days in the chimney corner, reading Pinneo's grammar with the intonations of a priest. She had, among the Quakers, friends who took care of her, for she was harmless and withal gentle.

She was the one who, in her old age, lived

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

with Hannah after the spiritualism was well developed, and who thought it was all the work of the devil. She used to go off up-stairs to bed, cover her head in the blanket and lie and moan when there were spiritual meetings and she heard Enoch speaking under the influence below. Peace to her ashes, she is dead. She was not religious in my opinion, but she was ecclesiastical and had all those trite similes and metaphors of church language on her tongue constantly.

Then there was that sister who died at Hannah's, that one of whom only one thing is necessary as a characteristic. She died with the words, "Pooh, pooh," on her lips. It was the question of the spirit life, in which she had no belief and with which she had no patience. She was an Ingersollian, with not enough interest in the whole subject of religion to be properly called an agnostic even. Or rather she was an indifferentist, and considered it more sensible to talk about the cooking of onions or the training of puppy dogs than of entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

It was on her very death-bed that Enoch said to her, "Beck, we shall meet again over the river." And she turned over with those words, "Pooh, pooh," so weak on her lips as hardly to be heard, but plainly to be recognized as like her, and died.

THE O'MARAS

Peace to her ashes, too. She showed more individuality and force of character in her indifference than most of her family did, and was not by any means a bad woman.

There was one other sister, who never came into close connection at all with our Enoch, and perhaps we might not mention her. She was an elocutionist, and in the execution of "Clarence's Dream," or some such tragedy, may have found sufficient vent for her surplus imagination and exercise for the muscles of her diaphragm. She was not a bad woman by any means ; but, though she claimed religion, I am inclined to think it was mostly abdominal ; and that she formed, therefore, no exception to the general rule of the O'Mara family.

Of the five boys, three were musicians ; one wrote poetry ; and one went off early and joined the Shakers, and was lost sight of. There were few descendants of any of them to bear their name. When people become hopeless and irreligious, they become unprolific ; for why should man, whose life is of few days and full of trouble any way, propagate himself ?

These men were all pleasant natured, but they are all gone. They were like some exotic plant that you attempt to cultivate ; it flourishes for a time, but pretty soon, you hardly know why, you can scarcely find a specimen of it left. Their genealogical tree culminated in this fam-

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

ily of ten children, and then died out. Back of it there may have been, must have been, something strong and durable ; but it took the worm in the bud and died.

Peace to all the family ! They may have been as well off, the O'Maras, as the Willoughbys, but look at the difference ! Old Margaret Willoughby, when she died, was the mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother of one hundred and twenty-nine children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. I am not sure but there were even great-greats among them. And at that time there were hardly a baker's dozen O'Maras left in the world.

It may have been the feeling of this fundamental difference in the make-up of the families that caused a little opposition to the marriage of young Enoch Willoughby and Hannah O'Mara. One family was going up and the other was going down. One was multiplying and replenishing the earth at a great rate ; the other was degenerating, weakening, dying out.

If old Margaret Willoughby had had a daughter-in-law with a hooked nose, a suspicion of a mustache, a square-set jaw, a voice harsh and commanding, and a disposition to be obeyed corresponding with all these qualities, I warrant you she would have meekened herself into the most amiable of mothers-in-law, for she could be good if she tried. The deep magnetism of

THE O'MARAS

her water-witching power would thrill one ; her voice was magnetic, too, and her face as expressive and captivating as if every separate muscle had been under her special command. But when visitors were absent ; when the necessity for self-control was no longer apparent ; when the old, human nature was allowed to assert itself ; she could become as disagreeable as a rattlesnake, and not even be conscious that she was not as good as ever.

So she could never understand why young Hannah was all the time crying after she came there to live.

“What was the matter with her?” she wondered. “She did not seem to have any force of character.” And so at the most trivial matters she would scold : if just the right directions had not been given to the servant ; if one of her Irish linen table-cloths had inadvertently been used for every day ; or any other thing, no matter how little, had gone wrong.

And then she would, most likely, come across Hannah, slender, delicate, poetic Hannah, off somewhere with eyes bathed in tears, and she would scold her again. What was the matter? She ought to know better than to give way to her feelings so, especially at this time ; the child would be a milksop and degenerate. She ought to be cheerful. And then, when Enoch would come home from work, Hannah

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

would seek him and throw her arms about his neck and weep again, with no cause apparent.

She could not and would not talk about his mother. It was no wonder that the first blue-eyed boy was weak and fretful, a whining infant, hard to take care of.

And the grandmother scolded the oftener and the mother cried the more ; and the poor old grandfather smoothed over and calmed down everything as often and as well as he could ; walked the woods with the little grandchild in his arms to ease grandmother's temper, and yet was rather glad for the sake of peace, when young Enoch took his wife, and pulling up stakes, broke camp, and removed for good and all, no matter where.

It is the law of the world that families shall be broken up in order that families shall be formed and live.

"Good-by, father ; good-by, mother," Enoch and Hannah had said bravely when the parting came ; "let us have no harshness, only love and friendliness ; we are following the ways of the world. Come and see us when we get settled. We will come back again some time to old Ohio. Good-by, good-by !"

III

PROSPERITY

PROSPERITY did not mean wealth for young Enoch and Hannah in their new Western life. It meant rather health, industry, economy. There is no story in this chapter. How can you make a story of two happy and loving young people, who have nothing to do but to go out into the world and conquer a place in it, and who are doing so with might and main?

As soon as they were fairly started on the way, the young wife threw her arms around her husband's neck and sobbed from excess of happiness. Now she was free. She would rather a thousand times live in a log cabin and be free to do as she pleased in it, than to live in a mansion and feel that she was always nagged at, and that things were never right. She felt great throbs of gratitude to her husband who had at last understood her without a word of explanation, and had said: "Wife and children first, and father and mother afterward," and taken them away.

She felt her love increase for his parents. Dear old Margaret! She could see now she

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

never meant it; she had not understood; she had forgotten the feelings of a young wife and mother in a new home. And Hannah resolved, over and over again, to do her best. She said in her heart she would work for him, she would slave for him. A man who would make a sacrifice like that deserved to be followed in the best sense of the word, and she would follow him.

There was another cause for gratitude that was not without its sting: her mother had recently died; her father had lost his property through a bad security debt, and with it his self-control and stability of character. He was not fit to take charge of his young children, and Enoch readily took them along. It was nothing, he said; he hardly thought of it. They would soon be able to work; were able to do something even then; those three children were no hindrance. And so they started West.

There was something glorious about Western life some fifty years ago. What black furrows they cut in the green sod out in Indiana, and how high they "heaped the golden corn." When the first signs of sterility came in the over-teeming soil, they sold to a new-comer at advanced prices, and went on to Iowa, and here again rich harvests of wheat and sales of fat cattle helped the young Westerner. These were the days when people carried yellow metal in

PROSPERITY

their pockets, and wages were worth their weight in gold.

Enoch hunted prairie chickens and quails and carried on his shoulder one of the best stub and twist shot-guns in the market, with his initials carved on the stock, and there was not a better shot in the country than he. How proud Hannah used to be of her tall, black-haired, handsome hunter! The boys would run to meet him and carry his game when he came home; he had one of the best hunting dogs about there. You could hear him sing as he strode out over the prairie:

“ Let the huntsman praise his hounds;
And the farmer praise his grounds;
And the priest praise the world that’s to come ! ”

If only he had let the priest do the praising of the world that is to come!

But it was a rich, full life, not only outwardly; this young couple were eagerly striving for intellectual improvement. Some of the best educations are obtained by men who have had no advantages for education; who have been balked in going to academy or college, and have retained from this a heightened sense of the incompleteness of their education. They have then remained students all their lives, and while they express themselves with humility, because their learning, they feel, has not the stamp of authority on it, have yet become the best think-

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

ers, the best scholars, and the richest minds of the time. Young Willoughby had a longing for learning. He had had little schooling. An itinerant teacher had kept a night-school in his district in Ohio, and there he had gotten the single rule of three, the rudiments of natural philosophy, and the beginnings in astronomy. He liked to study, but never read what he did not want to remember. He read no trashy novels, but he studied the problems of the stars; he had a clear idea of the universe in the modern conception. He had worked out for himself from these beginnings in natural philosophy a fair knowledge of mechanics also, and he turned with an almost infinite delight to the study of the Bible.

He was a man of good judgment in business and made money. People came to him for advice. Young men were sure of his sympathy. He paid Mose and Eck, his young brothers-in-law, for all they did, paid them well; he soon got them places where they could work for themselves, and was in truth their elder brother.

Hannah read too. That tall, slender woman, delicate in appearance, must have been of iron-wood fibre, for she did her own work voluntarily; brought up her children herself; found time to read, and go on occasional visits; and go always to meeting on First days and sometimes on Fourth days as well.

PROSPERITY

It might do our degenerate age good to see and know two such people.

Young Willoughby looked at that time more like the picture of Lowell when he was young than like anybody else; his nose was a little more curved perhaps, and there might have been a little more of the Jewish cast in his countenance. But as he strode over the hills or went about among his fellows, he was plainly king of them all, hills and fellows; a man without guile, with deep hope, strong, religious nature, deep love of wife and family, such a man as we should like to write a panegyric upon if the time would permit; proud of his English descent, proud of his broad acres, proud of his Western Americanism, proud of his wife and children, proud of his Quaker parentage, proud of his own manhood, and proud because, in the common sense of the word, he was not proud.

He had something of the poet in him, too, for he was sensitive and delicate; half woman in disposition; loved the moods of nature; took solitary walks in the middle of the night or through the gloomy woods, dripping with water; or over the prairies in the very face and teeth of the oncoming storm. Only expression was lacking in him. If that had been there, he might have become a poet, and been saved. Rhythm, alliteration, cadence, the melody of sound, and

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

the harmony of composition, have saved many a man from something worse.

And Hannah, with a little touch of melancholy that came from the O'Mara nature, had, alternating with it, spells of exuberant gayety; the tricks of a girl; the mimicry of an actress; the lightness of wit almost of a woman of Shakespeare, if there had only been some one to reproduce it. She was a true elder sister and companion, both to her own children and to her brothers and sisters.

And to those two, the church, that is the Quaker meeting several miles away, was a great thing. It formed the centre of their social life, and they were proud of it. It was the nucleus of their intellectual life, and they respected it. It was the soul of their spiritual life, and they venerated it. It was the church of their fathers and they loved it. On First day mornings and often on Fourth day, they rose much earlier than usual; got breakfast and did up the work and chores; curried and harnessed the horses; washed and dressed the children, and dressed themselves carefully; provided against a possible storm; allowed themselves an hour or more for going, and went away to Quaker meeting.

That is enough of their life to show what was meant by this chapter on prosperity. Would it might never have ended! Would it could have gone on to an endless increase!

IV

THE CLOSED BOOK

“DON’T go, Enoch, *don’t* go.”

These words of Hannah to Enoch were said with deep feeling, for how could the young wife bear to be left alone with nobody but the children, on a farm, in a solitary house, far away from the rest of the neighborhood in a wild country, before civilization had well advanced around them; and that, too, for what she considered a foolish idea; a mere unnecessary fancy; and yet, one she was bound to respect.

It was a question of Enoch’s going away to preach, to become a Quaker preacher; and that meant in those days to lead a life of sacrifice and real privation. The Quakers believed in the operation of the holy spirit, and so did not have ministers educated for preaching, or a hireling ministry. When the spirit came upon them, and they felt forced to it, they went about and preached the gospel in communities where they thought it was necessary. They often had help, were frequently carried from settlement to settlement; but they supported

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

themselves, and sacrificed often their time and their business to their sense of duty.

Enoch Willoughby was a spiritually minded man, deep, earnest, sensitive. The silence of the meeting, like that of the woods, the midnight, and the solitude of the storm, was full of meaning to him. At these times his mind filled with an inrush of thoughts that almost carried him away. Once or twice, under their strong influence, he had risen and spoken in meeting.

The Friends had come up afterward and congratulated him on his words, and he and Hannah had gone home, warm through and through with that good feeling which comes only from the praise of those for whose praise we care.

Hannah, also, had once or twice ventured a word in the woman's part of the meeting-house, and had been commended for it; and these two had thought about it, and talked about it. It was for both of them a sort of golden dream, a rich, good something that had come into their lives. It was as though you had suddenly found you had a talent for acting, a real, genuine talent, and were thinking how you could cultivate it, develop it, and make something out of it; thinking how your friends would praise you first, and later on an audience; then a community, and how pretty soon you would be known everywhere, and your opportunity to do great and

THE CLOSED BOOK

good things increased a hundred-fold. We all have a little of this in us, and Enoch and Hannah certainly were not to be blamed for it.

But the next time Enoch ventured to speak there was something noticeable about his speaking. People looked up; was it his breathing or the expression of his face? Or what was it? There was *something* singular about him.

All the Quakers in those days preached in a sing-song, a kind of uncultivated intoning. Even at that time people had begun to discuss this sing-song a little, and wonder whether it was necessary to good speaking. Some had even tried to speak without it. At the same time a very few had ventured to start a set tune in meeting, but the more spiritual had immediately frowned the attempt down. "To produce artificial aids to the spirit was to deaden the spirit," these said; and they were perhaps right; for, with organs and instruments and set psalms, with hired ministers and paid choirs, the old improvised religion is crowded out, and one of formality takes its place. In religion as in literature or art, the creative impulse must pass through three phases: first it worships, then hates, then rightly estimates its models before it can give full expression to that which is within itself. In Enoch Willoughby the subconsciousness was very great. He was a man of dreams and vision, of intuition and indefinite impres-

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

sion ; but he was not a poet, for the faculty of expression in him was not cultivated.

Things were born into his consciousness by a painful parturition, so that when the spirit came over him in meeting, he would first begin to twitch and jerk. The muscles of his face would move uneasily, and without control of the will ; his eyes assumed a peculiar look ; frequently his knees or his feet would be affected in some odd way ; and his voice took on a tone that was not at all natural to him. It was not like the regular Quaker sing-song. It was not pleasant to look at him at these times, nor was it pleasant to hear his voice.

Very frequently these actions would come upon him and last for a considerable time before he would be able to speak a word ; his breathing would be heavy ; he would be a noticeable sight ; and control himself he could not, without at once, as he said, driving the spirit away ; and this, he thought, was wrong ; perhaps even the unpardonable sin.

It must be remembered we are not describing superficial, trivial things here ; we are describing what is deepest and most important in some men's experience. This man believed in the spirit as an actual reality ; as we all did in those days. He believed as much in the possibility of offending the Holy Ghost as you and I do in the possibility of offending our neighbors.

THE CLOSED BOOK

And now, nothing in their lives, not even the bringing up and educating of their children—not even their relations to one another, or to the world, was more important to these young people than this matter of Enoch's speaking in meeting. He longed to talk with his father in Ohio about it. He felt the kind of impression he was making on the meeting, and knew it was not good. The old rich feeling of warmth to the heart's core, with which he and Hannah had once gone home from meeting after speaking there, was changed to one of mixed humiliation, and resisting pride, and determined perseverance.

Enoch must preach. He had been "called," and he could not help it. The matter took complete possession of his mind. He did almost nothing but think about it. He grew solitary, and wandered through the woods and over the prairie, neglecting his work and the children and Hannah. He remembered the deep peace that came over him in meeting after he had spoken; it was to him like sunshine after storm: like the placid lake after the rapids; like the quiet spring day after the winds and storms of March and April. He must obey the call.

And then he turned to reading the Bible, and he encouraged himself in his course. There was hardly a morning that he did not have a dream or vision to interpret, and when inter-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

preted it meant always that he must go out and preach.

Hannah sympathized with him fully and thoroughly; but she would have been hardly human, and certainly not the practical woman she was, if she had not had some objections to his going. She urged him not to go. She told him she did not believe the Committee would ever give him a letter to preach; they did not like his manner; and, then, she did not know what the rest of them would do. She even worked herself up to considerable spirit in this conversation; and when he said such things as "The Lord will provide," and "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all these things will be added unto you," and "It is only what the Master did, etc.," she would reply that Jesus had no wife and children to leave alone in a solitary farmhouse; and if He had had, she did not believe He would have gone; but if He had then gone, under such circumstances, she thought He might have done better.

These were bitter days for the whole family. When the father came in, the children did not run to him as before; they knew something was the matter. They sympathized with their mother; they cast shy glances at their father and left him for the most part alone. The air was oppressive and heavy; it seemed almost as if some one were dead in the house. What

THE CLOSED BOOK

would ever become of them? The gun, with its carved stock, rested on its rack over the door. The poor dog, dejected and unnoticed, followed his master about. These were sad, sad days; and little James, the oldest boy, would talk to his mother about what was the matter with father; and his mother would tell him he wanted to go and preach; he thought he ought to go and preach. And if the boy said anything, as he was inclined to do, not quite complimentary about his father, the mother would hush the child up as gently as possible.

She was determined to be a true and loyal wife, and teach her children respect for their father. She tried to keep them from hearing the discussion as much as she could, but when it came to the last, and Enoch said he "must go, Hannah," and she and he stood out by the house alone as she thought—he had kissed the children good-by without saying anything about it—then she threw her arms around his neck and sobbed and cried:

"Don't go, *don't* go."

It was very pitiful; and all the time there was a little fellow around the corner of the house, with clenched fist, and teeth set hard, and lips gnawing as he listened.

Finally Enoch took his wife's arms gently from around his neck, and kissed her; he put her firmly away, as if putting aside the temp-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

tation to worldly and carnal things ; bade her good-by ; to be of good cheer ; and went away, and left her.

Then she sank to the ground, sobbing as if her heart would break, and then, the little fellow, from around the corner of the house, rushed out, threw his arms about his mother's neck ; and in his burst of comforting zeal, cried out, in the midst of tears and sobs :

“ Never mind, mother, don't cry. Let the old fool go ! ”

They were dreadful words for a child ; but one must imagine the long strain he had been under ; imagine his quivering lips and compressed passion.

In an instant Hannah's tears ceased ; she rose slowly, and looked at the child for a long time closely and earnestly. The boy felt as though the heavens were about to fall. What had he done ? That word “ fool ” he had never been allowed to use ; had never used it, perhaps, before ; but he had heard, “ whosoever calleth his brother fool, is in danger of hell fire ; ” and though this was not his brother, perhaps it was worse than if it had been ; for that very reason, he had said it ; because he knew it was such an awful word.

Finally his mother told him she would have to punish him. She directed him to go and get a switch from the apple-tree in the garden,

THE CLOSED BOOK

and bring it to her. The boy obeyed without a word, and took his punishment without a murmur ; then kissed his mother and went away.

At first, after the whipping, the boy felt glad that he had said what he did. It is the first effect of punishment to justify the punished in their own eyes. Then he began gradually to have compunction, and then he went off and hid in the haymow.

There his little heart filled up with remembrance of his father, whom he loved tenderly ; and he began to cry. It was not long till his thoughts turned into prayer. He got down on his knees, and prayed, and sobbed. The great, awful danger of hell fire was over and about him. The wrong he had done, the love of his mother, his pride in defending and comforting her, then his humiliation and defeat, and now this dreadful load of an offended God and the torments of the damned, rose up before him. It was too much almost for him to bear. He prayed for forgiveness long and hard.

Finally the overwrought muscles and nerves relaxed. There came upon him such peace, such sweet peace. God had forgiven him. He knew it as well as he knew that the sun had risen, but he did not stop to think of it. He rested in it. He laid his little head down on the hay ; his eyes closed ; the child was asleep in the haymow.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

Hannah had, at first, thought she would take the children and go back to Ohio; then she had considered the matter again, and decided to wait awhile. Perhaps Enoch would return before long. It might be he would find himself mistaken. Perhaps his call was not so clear as he had thought. Possibly the spirit would not come upon him when he tried to preach away from home, among strangers. She felt a little satisfaction in thinking of it. She almost hoped it would not come. She did not believe there was any real necessity for his going; she believed he would soon come back; at any rate, she would wait awhile before doing anything.

Now let us consider a moment what Enoch himself thought, for we should be unwilling to consider it under any other light than that of deep earnestness. This was no trivial matter. Of course he never became a preacher. Now, we can look back upon it and consider it with a view to later events, and it seems altogether different; but then, Enoch was young; he did not know the future; his mind was full of great things, especially of the life of Jesus. The story of the gospels was constantly in his mind; even their beautiful, old English styles of expression were on his tongue. I have no doubt he imagined himself being driven out from home by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. All those expressions of the

THE CLOSED BOOK

Bible that justify the neglect of earthly affairs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven were constantly in his mind.

He might have been on the high road to insanity, as was said indeed, yet there was a high intellectuality about this little farm-house in those days; a profound spirituality; tender emotions; and nothing coarse, nothing vulgar, nothing commonplace. Not every one is capable, as young Enoch Willoughby was, of being led to such convictions, of adopting so unselfish and noble an enthusiasm. It is in the silent bosom of some little family like this often, between husband and wife, between mother and daughter, between father and son, or son and mother, or brothers and sisters, that the great, deep tragedies of life are lived out and finished.

What experiences of mind or body Enoch went through during his absence Hannah never knew. The time remained to her a great, sealed book. It is doubtful whether Enoch himself more than half knew where he went or what he did. He knew the great world that was revolving in his mind; but the little outer world largely escaped his observation. The Quakers did not give him a letter to preach, and discouraged him from the undertaking. He cared little, for that was only one of the small outward formalities. But there was more that he had to care for. He was not at peace with the spirit,

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

nor the spirit with him. There was not that harmony between the two that might lead to great things ; the incarnation was not complete.

There were always himself and the spirit struggling to retain possession of the flesh, and however they might rend and tear it, they were never at peace. I mean, exactly the same old difficulties of expression were always there, and would not leave him, that he had experienced when he attempted to speak in the meetings at home.

It was nearly six weeks before he returned, thin, pale, haggard. The struggle with the spiritual world had been very great in him. He fell into Hannah's arms in one long, silent embrace. She kissed her young Enoch passionately, and smoothed back his glossy, black hair, which was all that had thriven about him during that period of wandering. They wept together as though it had been a parting, instead of a meeting. He hugged his children to his breast, but they were almost afraid of him. And when finally Hannah asked him where he had been, and wanted to know something about his doings, he said :

" Let it be a closed book between us, Hannah ; let it be a closed book between us."

V

THE VISION

BUT an experience like this could not be entirely closed, for it had an influence on Enoch's whole life. It seemed to have been a turning point in his course, or rather a point where the hill-top had been reached in the road; and where, henceforth, it began to fall away and run more swiftly and decidedly to its end. Not that from this time he was taking the down-hill road to ruin, or anything of that kind; but simply from this time on he became more fixed and positive, less and less amenable to the advice or influence of others.

He had been to see his sister Sarah, that one who had most of the same peculiar nature he had in himself. This much came out incidentally from his conversation. He told of that wonderful cure she had effected of the pain in his breast. These two had strengthened each other in their belief; but one good influence Aunt Sarah—that is what the children called her—had had upon him: she taught him that in this day and generation of the world there is nothing more important for a man of a family to do than

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

carefully to attend to his family. She taught him to avoid excess in his enthusiasm—she had probably learned that from her own experience ; not to give up too readily to his impulses ; and that the plain, hard, common-sense of business life was after all one of the saving graces and kept people from all kinds of excesses. He must have taken this lesson in thoroughly, or else it was a part of the old Willoughby inheritance, for he acted in accordance with it from this time on.

Though he never grew rich, he never became poor ; remained independent and able to assist the needy about him ; and even when he went farthest in his extravagant theories and wild spiritualistic notions, he always kept control of his business and lived the life of a substantial, respectable business man.

But after this return, he talked more and more of spiritual things, that is of strangely spiritual things, things odd, peculiar ; this cure of Aunt Sarah's for instance, and how he had been at the cross-roads and not known which way to turn, and had heard a voice, as it were, speaking in his ear, telling him to turn to the left. He had done so and had come to his destination. His sister had told him his very thoughts in many cases. They had talked about the spirit. They always spoke of it then as the holy spirit,—for they were both Quakers,—and the peculiar way

THE VISION

it had of influencing Enoch. Sarah explained that to him as an inheritance of his mother, Margaret, who had a strange magnetic influence about her. At that time spiritualism was just starting in this country. They had both heard of it; they both shunned it; but they both looked into it. They both felt interested, but yet a little afraid of the matter.

Indeed they believed in the action of the holy spirit, believed it as much as we believe any of the common things of life, and this influence was to them something tangible, real. It was possible for them to be caught up by the spirit, they thought, and be actually carried away contrary to their own wills and purposes, to be led off to another town as George Fox was, often, and there to preach or prophesy or exhort without knowing why; to be moved to go to a particular person, perhaps an entire stranger, and under an irresistible impulse, begin to talk to that person on, let us say, matrimonial infelicity, and gradually bring the subject nearer and nearer home to his own treatment of his wife; then boldly to accuse him of such ill-treatment of her and to lecture him into shame of himself until he acknowledged his fault, and was struck with wonder at the possibility of his accuser knowing anything of the circumstances. That was what they called being led by the spirit, and such things were happen-

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

ing, they believed, constantly, and they did not consider such actions insanity. It was the spirit come upon them. They had seen Uncle Allen go under the "influence" in their early lives as children; they had seen him begin to twitch and move about uneasily and breathe heavily and then finally rise, and begin to preach. It was nothing. Now they began to think it was, partly at least, not the holy spirit, but spirits, departed spirits, that were doing it. It was Biblical enough to believe that, and these people for generations were steeped in the very essence of the Scriptures.

It was a long time before Enoch would use the name spiritualism at all, and Hannah could not bear to hear it even mentioned; it gave her the cold shivers. But they began to hold meetings, Enoch and Hannah, and the children if they remained awake, and Hannah's younger sister Lyddie, and her brothers Mose and Eck. They did not call them circles: I do not think they had heard the word *séance* yet; if they had, they would not have used it. They called them spiritual meetings or sittings.

They held them now frequently after Enoch's return, and he was almost always "influenced." At first Hannah struggled against them, thought they ought not to have the children in them. To tell the truth she had a secret fear lest something was the matter with Enoch's mind, and yet

THE VISION

she would not have mentioned such a thing for the world. She overcame her feelings as well as she could, kept silent, and let things take their course.

For Enoch, at first at any rate, these were purely religious meetings : they were not different from the silent sittings in the Quaker church ; the effect upon him was much the same, and afterward there was the same interest in discussing what he had been led to say or do while under the influence as there had been after the Quaker meetings.

These were very strange performances, especially for the violence of Enoch's "control." Imagine how he looked : very tall ; dark hair ; blue eyes ; fair skin ; long, slender hands and fingers ; —delicacy and power combined. Imagine the children seated around the room and all holding hands ; a very serious look on the faces of all, and fear on some. And then imagine Enoch going under the "influence : " the hard breathing, the vacant eye, the twitching muscles, the jerking hands or knees, and then perhaps the hands breaking loose and beginning to pound the knees harder and harder, or the knees striking together violently, the feet beginning to shuffle about, the mouth to draw down at the corners, with all imaginable, singular motions. Think of the interest and wonder and fear in the childrens' faces and even in Hannah's.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

And then, just imagine the man rising and beginning to speak, in an altogether unnatural voice, so that you had to look carefully at him to be sure that it was the same person speaking whom you had known, and then hear this voice pass into terrible wailing—I know not what else to call it—intense, fearful, awful. There is no more terrible thing in the world than a human voice. Imagine the shriek of terror, the cry for help, the despairing wail, the moan of anguish ; all of these put into a little close room. It was fearful.

These trances were accompanied by cold feet and hands, and a forehead with great sweat-drops standing out like beads upon it ; sometimes they were followed by a kind of trance, in which the man lay or sat like one dead, and yet he did not suffer in them at all.

The first time they had one of these sittings was soon after Enoch returned, and in it his “control” was one of the most violent. Toward the last, he had gone through the action of being crucified, and had stood with arms and feet extended, apparently in great agony, stiff and moaning, until he had finally sunk to the floor and lain there till the trance passed off.

The children sobbed and asked Hannah if he was dead. She knew not what to say and was almost as much frightened as they were. Finally he came to himself ; and rose and lay down

THE VISION

on the lounge, exhausted. The children were put to bed. Mose and Eck were upstairs ; and Lyddie was in her room, but too much afraid to undress. She simply lay down on top of the bed, pulled the cover over her and left the light burning. The smaller children went to sleep with their faces pressed close against each other for fear ; and even Mose and Eck, who nearly always had a scuffle on going to bed and pretended to quarrel if they so much as touched one another, now lay as close together as two girls. Hannah sat alone watching Enoch, lying asleep. Pretty soon he awoke, and asked her if she was not going to bed, and they both went to bed then.

Enoch almost immediately fell asleep, but Hannah could not sleep. She lay beside him and heard him breathe ; and, in some way, a great, sickening, terrible fear came over her. She did not know what it was, but she could not lie there. Every motion of the form near her sent a shiver through her. She put together all the strange things she could remember of him and of his whole family. There had none of them gone crazy ; it wasn't that ; but there was something. She could not bear it.

Slowly and carefully she got up so as not to awaken him ; she drew on a gown, and went to the children's room and lay down beside the children. She felt better ; it was no use for

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

her to try to sleep. She lay there and fought with her thoughts and feelings all night long, and a long and fearful night it was.

Toward morning, when the light had somewhat scattered her fears, she got up and quietly took off her gown and lay down again beside Enoch; and when he awoke, she pretended to awaken also. He did not know that for one night his wife had left his bed and board, and had been for those few hours, in thought and feeling, divorced from him. But, with the light, came a change; a feeling of peace and security. The blessed sunshine had driven all that storm away. The very clatter of the dishes, as Hannah and Lyddie washed them and wiped them and put them up after breakfast, was pleasant and cheerful. Outside, Enoch and Mose were grinding the sickle, preparing to cut hay. It was all gone; what had it been anyway? What was there last night that made her lie awake the whole night through in the children's bed? It was strange, very strange; but whatever it was, it was gone now. She got some old newspapers, and she and Lyddie cut out and put up new covers for the pantry shelves. After dinner she took a long nap; and that evening she and Enoch went over and paid a visit to the Cadwalladers, and called on the old maids. Hannah forgot everything. She was sorry that these old ladies had not

THE VISION

such a husband as she had ; and as they came back together, she and Enoch, they were as playful and loving as they used to be away back in Ohio in the days of their courtship, and Enoch had his arm about her.

But though the sun might expel the clouds for a time, they would come again ; and the very next night there was another experience. This time there was little preparation for it. Enoch had been more or less silent at noon when in the house, and was so still, in the evening. A little of that same feeling of oppressiveness had come over everyone that always does when one of a company is gloomy or distressed.

After supper, they had gathered in the sitting-room when Enoch went out. Hannah noticed him carefully, but there was nothing remarkable in his behavior. He remained out a long time ; they were beginning to be somewhat frightened, and Hannah had suggested to Eck that he go and see what Enoch was doing at the stable. But Eck did not go at once—probably he was a little afraid and just then Enoch came in.

Everyone saw at a glance something had happened. He was pale as a sheet, and seemed utterly exhausted ; at first he could not speak, and lay down on the bed. All in the room were silent, and waited until he could tell what

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

was the matter. Finally he told them he had been seized and beaten by a spirit.

It was useless to express surprise ; the man as thoroughly believed what he was saying as I believe I am this moment holding the pen. He had gone out to the corn-crib to feed the horses, and had stooped down to pick up the corn and put it in the basket. Just then a tall and powerful man seized him, and with a club began beating him ; saying all the time :

“I will teach thee to deny me, I will teach thee to deny me.”

He continued beating him until at last he fell down exhausted on the floor of the crib and became unconscious.

This was the way he told of it then, and always after that ; for he told the story as long as he lived and thoroughly believed it himself. He had, it seems, been pondering whether to acknowledge the name of spiritualism or not, and could not make up his mind. It was a name in bad repute, and he loved the church of his fathers ; but he felt compunction for believing what he did not acknowledge. Probably this compunction had increased into remorse, for he had the imaginative mind that can magnify a thousand diameters every little thing, and this remorse may have produced the effect. But he believed it was a spirit and that he had been punished, and had learned a lesson.

THE VISION

Thereafter he called himself a spiritualist openly and always, even when the odium attached to the name was as falsely applied to him as the honor attached to the orthodoxy of the Friends' Society would have been. The man had the imagination that would make him throw an ink-stand at the devil. People, invisible to every one else, came in and spoke to him; ideas burst upon him like skyrocketes, with startling force and with all the individuality of concrete things. They were not the indistinct, misty, brain-fog they are to some people; but to him had actual form, color, and sound.

It was nothing strange for him to leave his work in the field and return to the house in the middle of the morning, because some idea had come to him with such force and clearness he could not resist the temptation to go up and communicate it to Hannah.

Having no knowledge of the meaning of language, except that which was forced into it by the connection of thought, he was constantly surprised by having words that he had used in reading without knowing their meaning suddenly burst open into significance. For days and weeks he once carried the word "identity" about with him, perhaps in his subconsciousness, not half knowing its meaning; and when the meaning came to him, he unhitched the

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

horses and came to the house. That was enough glory for one day. In the same way, too, his dreams were clearer than those of most people; and some of them had a fashion of repeating themselves night after night with greater and greater distinctness until they pushed aside reality and became truer to him than truth itself.

Certain of these repeated dreams finally seemed to him to come always before events of a particular character, and he came to believe that they had significance, that they were given to him or sent to him as intimations for warning or advice. They would make a volume of literature if they were written down, but there is not time for it. Other events must be shown.

VI

A FOLLOWER OF A FOLLOWER

THE effect of a life like this upon those familiar with it wears off gradually. As soon as the strangeness of his performances was gone, there was something rather interesting about them. They varied the monotony of the long winter evenings, and they gave always the feeling of uncertainty or mystery to everything. Others of the family wondered if they could act like that and thought something of trying it. Occasionally a neighbor dropped in and saw these sittings, and spread accounts of them. Enoch and Hannah went to meeting as regularly as ever, and Enoch had by no means lost the habit of speaking there, but now the Quakers had heard that he was becoming a spiritualist and they began to notice him more closely and to show a little coolness.

Hannah observed that the Friends did not visit them any more, that there was not the same cordiality on the meeting-house porch before and after meetings as formerly, and she spoke to Enoch about it; but she might as well have spoken to the wind. It was no use to urge him

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

to say nothing about his new theories until he had examined them further. He was like a child that has found something new. He must go and show it to everybody. He talked to all of the Friends about it, as far as he could get them to discuss the matter, and he was surprised and hurt to find that they would turn away without interest. Some even said pretty severe things to him. It was hinted that he might possibly have an evil spirit. They shut him off in the meeting all they could without noticeably offending him.

Enoch felt intensely humiliated. This greatest glory that had ever come to him, was then of the devil, was it? He was a false prophet, deceived by Satan, and himself deceiving the elect, was he? He studied over this phase of it for months. He asked himself in all humility if he was self-deceived, and he found the best answer a man can find; he had to believe in himself, and he said, "No, he was not." Then he went on in the same way. His reputation for strange and gruesome things spread in the neighborhood; the coolness increased between him and the Friends and most other orthodox people round about, and the more this grew, the more Enoch Willoughby tried to right himself in the eyes of the world by uprightness and moral living. That became a sort of mania with him too, and in that he succeeded. His reputation for

A FOLLOWER OF A FOLLOWER

honesty became fixed and secure. Some people even took advantage of it, and then eased their consciences by saying he was only an old spiritualist.

For society, he chose those people who would listen to his theories, and these were, of course, those who had none themselves; the ignorant, the curious; people from the woods district; the family got a bad reputation, much worse than it deserved. And all this time Enoch studied the Bible and filled himself with it, especially with its spiritual portions; the story of Elias, the Gospels, and Acts, and the entire life of Paul and his teachings. There was no one in the country that knew anything at all about it compared to him.

The preachers of the Quaker meeting and of other churches in the region avoided him, and would not enter into a discussion with him. They had not time, and even if they had been able by study to overcome him in argument, which is doubtful, it would have required months to prepare for such a combat. The Bible is full of spiritual things, and that man believed them and thought he understood them; he believed in Christ and his spiritual resurrection, and in the after life of all mankind; he believed in God; he believed in good and bad spirits; he believed in the power of the spiritual world about him, and that made him believe all the miraculous in it;

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

but he was queer ; he could not help it ; he came by it naturally, and he had to suffer the consequences of it, I suppose.

Enoch Willoughby had one follower, even now. You will never find a man of ideas without some followers, but one would be surprised to know who this was. It was Lyddie. These children all liked their elder brother Enoch ; he was like a father to them, good and kind always. Restrained by his mental disposition from all undue familiarity, he held their respect. Lyddie, as we have said, was a beautiful young girl, impressionable, with eyes gentle and affectionate and she experienced something in those evening meetings, enough to make her believe there was more than mere imagination in them.

They did not encourage the children to sit with them ; but Lyddie was now a woman and accustomed to doing very much as she pleased, and she frequently did take part. The first time they ever knew of her being "influenced" was one day after a meeting the night before. Lyddie with the rest of the children had gone out to the plum thicket to gather plums ; there, suddenly, the girl was seized upon by the power of the spirit, and under the influence, gathered the children together and preached to them. Then she led them to the house in great wonder, and there gathered the other members of the household together and preached to them

A FOLLOWER OF A FOLLOWER

also. It was a very strange performance in a young girl, and might be incredible if one did not consider the strong spiritual influence that surrounded the whole family all the time. They lived in an atmosphere of it, and could not get away from it. After this, for a time, Lyddie would be influenced at these meetings and speak; but Hannah did not encourage it, nor did Enoch think it best for so young a girl to give herself up to that kind of spirituality. He used to apply the words of Paul, "When I was a child, I spake as a child," and so forth, to her case.

So Lyddie did not become a spiritual medium at all, but she had had experiences enough to prevent her censuring Enoch Willoughby's actions or theories, or feeling afraid of him. She believed in him, liked him, and respected him, and nothing used so to arouse her indignation as to hear, as she did constantly, when she was away from home, those hints and allusions to his bad influence. Some people actually believed that the Willoughby house was possessed; that there were ghosts there and demons. Many people were afraid to go along the road by it; and many people avoided the Willoughbys themselves as though they had some contagion about them. Such a feeling cements family ties more closely. They all felt that Enoch was unjustly accused, that people

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

did not know him, that little things were magnified in his case, and Lyddie in particular had said in her heart, she would never have anything to do with any one who thought that.

Now Lyddie could not help being as sweet and gentle as the whole O'Mara nature combined could make her, and when she went to the Quaker meeting in those early days and sat rapt in attention to some spiritual speaker, or held by the charm of the meeting's silence, there was something about her eyes that caught William Olney Price and held him, he did not know how; there was something about her face and her whole action that he could not get out of his mind. He had hardly spoken to her. She was a country girl and lived seven miles away from the village. She was an orphan and had nothing. She had been brought up by charity and by a rather singular family. William Olney's father was the head of the meeting and its principal support. He was the wealthiest man in the village, and perhaps the man of the least spirituality. He was of the old Providence Quakers, grounded in respectability and tradition, with only one son, whom he was counting on to become the heir to his fortune, and then the founder of a family here in the West, which should by its success more than outweigh that fault of being Westerners.

It was the same old story, for here was

A FOLLOWER OF A FOLLOWER

William Olney with the face of Lyddie O'Mara already settling in his mind.

This was about the time when Enoch and Hannah began to feel the increasing coolness of the Friends and to find excuses more and more for not going to meeting. It now not infrequently looked like rain, or they got up late in the morning and it was so far away. And young William Olney Price made all haste to meeting First day mornings and watched every new-comer and listened as every wagon drove up, but no one came. So he watched First day after First day, and once suggested to his father that the Willoughbys did not come to meeting now any more. His father told him he feared they were drifting away from the church, and would perhaps have to be dealt with by the meeting, and perhaps it was just as well they should not come. Sometimes even when they did come Lyddie stayed away purposely. She felt and knew that there had been a gaze fastened on her in meeting, and she knew whose it was. She did not have to see with her eyes, she had had that very person in mind when she had said, "I shall never have anything to do with one who thinks of us as I know William Price does." She did not want to go to meeting any more. She had heard that William Price was close and exacting; that he was making money, and was even then said to be rich,

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

and it repelled her. She did not want to know those people better ; she had an idea there was something hard and cold about them. She put them off in imagination into an entirely different world ; thought of them as a different class of human beings from her. She wished they would not come to meeting. She thought they spoiled the sweet peace she used to feel there. She never liked to look at Rachel Price when she came into the meeting-house, for she seemed always to have unpleasant thoughts from it. And William Price, the father, she thought stiff and formal. Poor William Olney ! I am afraid his eyes roved in the wrong direction this time.

William Olney occasionally rode out from the village and passed the Willoughby house. If he had gone boldly in, it would not have been out of the way at all. The neighborhood was not large, and every one in it was somewhat acquainted with every one else. He knew the Willoughbys, and his father and mother knew them. It is true it was a rather formal acquaintance, for both families instinctively felt they were different from each other. The young man could not help wondering what his father and mother would say if he should go to see Lyddie O'Mara.

He thought this all over as he rode past the house, rather hoping he might at least see

A FOLLOWER OF A FOLLOWER

Lyddie. He had some idea of going in, and wished he might find some reasonable excuse for it; but as none presented itself he determined to wait until some better opportunity arose. Perhaps when the Willoughbys came to meeting again, he would find some way of becoming better acquainted with her.

VII

IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

UNPLEASANT as well as agreeable scenes must be described sometimes, because other events depend upon them. If it were not so, we should gladly omit what is to come now.

The Willoughbys came to meeting again at last and Lyddie with them. They were still members in good standing, and very respectable people. They loved this old Quaker meeting; and while Enoch had not been encouraged to go out as a preacher, there was no reason why he should not speak in the meeting at home if the spirit moved him, and that it was pretty sure to do.

It was altogether too sure, Hannah felt; and Lyddie and she now were almost afraid to go to meeting. What if one of those spells should come on him there such as he had at home? What would people in meeting do if such a spirit should come over him? It was too dreadful to think of, and they put it out of their thoughts. But they were all afraid. Even Enoch himself prayed in his heart he might not be the one by whom the offence was to come. It

IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

was with this feeling over them that they came to meeting one day and sat down in that same old beautiful silence. We may be sure William Olney was there, but Lyddie had resolutely failed to see him or even to allow herself to feel his gaze fastened upon her. Oh, if they only got safely out of it! If Enoch could only control himself!

I do not know what in the world possessed the man, when he knew the unpleasantness of his manner, to allow himself ever to speak,—unless it be that his own theories about it were correct. He was like Paul, who was a Pharisee and believed in the resurrection, but who, like his fellow-religionists, had put the belief away out of his life as an indefinite, intangible truth, without any practical bearing, good enough to believe in, but not capable of any proof or demonstration; for whom then, after his conversion, the other life became a living reality and whose attempt to prove to his fellow-religionists what they themselves believed, made him an offence.

“Would I of my own accord, Hannah,” Enoch asked, “rise up before our old congregation and make myself an object of ridicule? Such a thing is not to be believed of any one; then, if I do so, they must believe that I am not acting of myself, but of the spirit.”

It was a good explanation and satisfied his

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

need of a reasonable theory; but it could hardly satisfy the members of his own family, who loved him and respected him, and could not bear to see him make himself an object of ridicule. But it had to be.

The moment he rose every one looked at him. He went through the same singular actions. There was that contraction of the muscles of the face that indicated a violent "control." Lyddie leaned her head down on her hands, unable to look at him, and Hannah hardly knew which way to turn or what to do.

When he spoke, there was that tone in his voice that she dreaded. First he prayed, and the meeting waited till he was through; but the spirit had not yet left him; when then he proceeded to speak, the voice was so strange, so unpleasant that uncle William Price, who sat at the head of the meeting, felt it a kindness to him and every one else to break meeting and did so, leaning over and shaking hands with his next neighbor, who sat with him on the high bench at the head of the men's side.

The meeting was broken up, and people were free to go out; but Enoch had not yet ceased. He seemed to be almost unconscious of what was going on, and continued speaking for some time. Even after Hannah rushed up to him, took hold of him and spoke to him, it was some time before she could call him back out of his

IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

trance. And poor Lyddie was sitting with her face covered, concealing her emotions as well as she could.

When Enoch finally ceased speaking, Lyddie looked up; there was no one in the meeting-house but herself and Hannah and Enoch, who had now come out from under the influence.

When they went out on the porch, most people had gone; and the few that remained seemed rather to avoid them and did not come up and speak to them. They were, however, becoming rather accustomed to this, and were all the more surprised that as they were about to go away young William Olney Price came up to Enoch, and reached out and shook hands with him. He then spoke to Hannah and Lyddie and shook hands with them; which should not have surprised any one, as it was the custom for every one to shake hands after meeting. Now, however, it was a little surprising to Enoch and Hannah.

They talked of it afterward.

"Did thee notice," Hannah asked, "that young William Olney Price was the only one in the meeting who came up after thee wrestled with the spirit, and spoke to us?"

Enoch had noticed it, and wondered at it a little.

Now these people did not consider that any great harm had been done. Enoch Willoughby

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

felt humiliated sometimes that he did not speak and pray in a becoming manner, but this very action was consistent with his theories and substantiated them. He did wish sincerely that the spirit might come upon him with unction and cause him to act and speak in a pleasing way; but if it would not, he could not help it. He had to *try* the spirits, he said, using the Biblical explanation as he always did in support of his claim; and further he used to say the Kingdom of Heaven was like a net cast into the sea, in which fishes of the most diverse kinds are liable to be caught; but he saw that until a more gracious or pleasing spirit could be induced to come upon him, it would be better for him not to go to meeting, but to practise his development at home.

It might even be an evil spirit; he could not deny the possibility; but he never thought of giving up the whole subject and turning to the things of this life alone and caring for them only. That would have been to turn his back on the spirit world, which was to him the whole of religion. It meant the power of God, the future life, the resurrection of Jesus, and possibility of all miracles on which the whole structure was built; and besides, he never forgot those words he had heard in the corn-crib that night he was beaten to death in spirit: "I will teach thee to deny me." Paul's conversion on

IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

the way to Damascus was not more vivid and real to him than was his to Enoch Willoughby. I really believe the man thought it would be better to have occasional communications with an evil spirit, and know thus that there was a spiritual world around us and about us, than to be entirely shut away from such knowledge.

It is true he began now to turn more and more to argument, though in that he was not much more successful than in his inspiration. While there was not the same queerness manifested, there was in all his reasoning a quiet assumption of authority, of personal knowledge and experience, that others generally could not or would not assume; and while this very thing, with the uneducated and ignorant, gave him power and influence among the opposite class it aroused opposition. It was not very long before Enoch Willoughby was set over against the whole Quaker meeting, and the whole Quaker meeting was set over against him.

Now, if it were possible, it would be well to give some idea of the extent to which religion, we will not say superstition—those who want to may say that—entered into the life of this household. They lived, all of them, in the very arms of an invisible world, under the eye of good and bad spirits. The conversation at table, at work, in the evening, assumed the presence of such a thing; and again and again we must mention the

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

Bible ; it had been the spiritual food of the whole family for generations, and it was as though it were all being concentrated now in this one time and place. If one of the children of that household now, after fifty years have passed, would but turn his thoughts back to that time, to that house in the woods, and to those surroundings, and open the ear of his spirit to the conversation there, he would hear more of the Scripture in recollection than has collected in his mind during all the long interval since. And a kindness and gentleness and a sweet hope were perennial in that family ; for them life was not stale and unprofitable and barren, but was always a fresh and vigorous preparation for something better. And yet this man now became what Paul was to the Jews and even to his own sect of the Pharisees, a desecrator of the temple, a perverter of morals, a weakener of the church.

The house in which he lived became known as a haunted house ; the man himself was soon generally called "Old Enoch Willoughby," and some added, "the old spiritualist," and some "the old atheist," and some the "old infidel ;" and all of this, I am sure, grew out of nothing but a little queerness.

Then came the investigating committee, sent out from the meeting to consider Enoch's soundness or unsoundness of doctrine, an event that

IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

for the family was like the coming of a great accident, a cataclysm of nature, an earthquake or a tornado that rends the earth asunder or lays the house low and leaves ruin in hearts and homes.

“Verily, I come not to bring peace, but the sword;” and so it will always be with the coming of the spirit, of which Christ was the greatest type; “for the natural man knoweth not the things of the spirit, neither can he know.”

VIII

“ WILLIAM OLNEY ”

THIS last coming of the Willoughbys to the Quaker meeting had not improved young William Olney's case ; on the contrary it had been like the second stroke of the hammer on the head of the nail. The sight of Lyddie in tears, that day in the meeting-house, had made a great impression on him. Now, in his fancy, he would see her face, resting demurely under her Quaker bonnet, and get the look of those deep soft eyes ; and then in a moment, the head would lean forward, and he would hear a little sob ; or he would see a film gather over the eyes and concentrate into drops, and stand like pearls on the eyelids until they fell. The sweet orphan girl, sobbing in church, was something he could not get out of his mind for a single moment.

He was glad he had gone up and spoken to her and her people ; he had been almost afraid to do so for fear it might look like pity or misplaced sympathy on his part. But he had shown his friendliness, they certainly could not mistake that.

“WILLIAM OLNEY”

And it had been shown in another way also. He had found means of becoming better acquainted with Mose and Eck, Lyddie's brothers. He had been with them several times, and it would not be very noticeable now if he should go out to their house to see them. It is singular what ways other than the straightforward one a young fellow in love will take. The first time he went he did not see Lyddie at all, but stopped at the gate leading into the yard, sat on his horse awhile and talked with Mose, the younger of the boys. Finally Eck saw them and came up, and a game of quoits was proposed. William Olney dismounted and pitched horse-shoes with the boys awhile and then went away.

I do not know how he brought it about; it is all too long ago, and one forgets all the twists and turns of that kind of thing. Did any one ever observe two little children becoming acquainted—how oddly they look at each other, and how stiff and awkward they seem; till suddenly it is all over; you look up and they are playing together as though they had known each other for years. It was by a good deal such “windlasses and assays of bias” that young William Olney became acquainted with Lyddie. But it was done in one way or another, and the first thing we know he was riding out there frequently to see her.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

He became recognized now as Lyddie's company. There was a good deal of awkwardness in knowing just what to do with him. It was difficult to treat him with the proper amount of indifference; he threw a kind of restraint upon the family. No one knew just what to say when he was about, and it was hardest of all for Lyddie to get on with him.

But this stiffness and reserve which his coming always produced, he did not at all notice. He had been brought up in such an atmosphere, and found everything here comparatively free. Every one in this household did much as he pleased and had an individuality of his own that was rather surprising to him.

At home as a boy he had been kept under strict control, taught to show obedience, and respect for his elders, and observance of forms of all kinds. His books had been carefully selected for him as well as his playmates. He had been held closely to the old-fashioned, strictly orthodox notions of life; had not been allowed to whistle or even sing about the house, or speak above a certain pitch; had been dressed regularly on First Day mornings for Sunday-school and meetings, and the rest of the day been kept pretty closely in the company of his father and mother, and the elderly people whom they might happen to visit, until he learned to dread Sundays, to dislike the

“WILLIAM OLNEY”

Sunday-schools, to yawn and even fall asleep when the Quaker women were preaching ; and found life, as a boy, rather dull and tame. Then, when he came to go to college, it was not better, for at Providence he was put under the charge of an elderly uncle, his father's brother, whose household had been somewhat on the same order.

While there was perhaps no great life pulsing in the boy, he longed for a little of its bright side and colors. He might have had no music in himself, but he was moved by concord of sweet sounds. He would hardly have dared to acknowledge it, but the sound of a violin stirred him in a way he could not account for. He liked ruddy faces, red hair, and bright eyes. His sister, older than he, was pale always, and thin ; a copy of his mother, who had a stately, dignified way about her that harmonized perhaps with the Quaker drabs and dull blacks which she wore. He had been used to this and he wanted the opposite. He would have liked just once to put on a red necktie and tan colored boots, to see how they would feel ; but he would hardly have ventured it. He plugged away at his Latin and Greek and mathematics, and hoped the time might come when the folks at home would be satisfied he had done enough of them. He had good prospects, but he cared little about them ; he would be rich some day,

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

but he had not come to the consideration of that matter yet. He was an obedient boy to his mother and sister, a dutiful son of his father, a student who never broke rules. He was a birth-right member of the Quaker meeting, of course, and that was in the days before any formal confirmation was thought necessary. And if his father and mother ever thought of him at all as likely to marry, they would have supposed of course he would defer to their wishes in the matter.

It is likely he never in his life opposed his parents in any way until he saw Lyddie O'Mara and fell in love with her. Then it seemed as if all the humility and submission of his nature had changed into obstinacy and determination. He suddenly cared for nothing else in the world but that girl, and everything that surrounded her seemed to be just what he liked. The very touch of the hand of these people in some way was different.

He did not give himself an account of all these things, but he felt like one who has been frozen up and is being thawed out. Even in the matter of his Biblical education, he had been brought up in formality. Though he had read the Bible all his life, he found that he knew little about it. He knew the geography of it; could tell where Samaria and Jerusalem and possibly Antioch lay; a few of its uncertain dates had been

“WILLIAM OLNEY”

drilled into his head, and he knew the names of the books, with their doubtful authorship. But when he came to hear the Bible spoken, so to speak, as it was here, its expressions in common use, he found that he really knew nothing at all about the spirit of the book. Even Lyddie could laugh at his ignorance, and he liked the way she made sport of him for it. He did not think it possible that such things as trances could be even spoken of in the Bible ; and that the spirit came on people like a rushing, mighty wind, and made them act strangely and talk in strange languages, he had never heard.

Lyddie said, with a twinkle in her eye : “He had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” It amused the whole family to tease him and show him how little he knew about these matters, and to wonder what he ever studied at college anyway.

And all the time Lyddie was teasing him for his lack of knowledge of Scriptural spirituality, he was drinking in the sight of her gentle eyes, the rich color of her cheeks, her voice that seemed to him something sweet enough to melt. And all this time a storm was brewing for him at home ; one of those quiet storms with no thunder, no lightning, no black cloud and oncoming wrack and wind and dust and slamming shutters, and then, after all, no rain ; but one of

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

those storms that come up by a gentle east wind in a clear day, and about to-morrow high up in the circumambient air, a filmy cirrus cloud begins to form—the sun grows slightly pale, and the sky slightly ringed and crossed around it, and then far down toward the horizon the cloud becomes darker and thicker; presently a few drops fall, then more and more; rolls of distant, subdued, conventional thunder are heard at proper intervals; and not until all the cisterns of earth are filled and have overflowed does this mild and unostentatious storm pass away.

That was the kind of Quaker thunder-storm young William Olney must expect to encounter.

IX

THE VISIT HOME

EVERY man ought to have some business, we suppose, even in fiction; and with all Enoch Willoughby's dreams and visions and general spirituality, he was a farmer and made his money mostly through cattle raising. Permit us to say he was a good judge of cattle, a successful feeder, and could give offhand the weight of a steer as closely as any other man in the county. He took pride in it too. But his good judgment of cattle and careful purchases of stock to stall-feed in the fall could not hinder his making mistakes in estimating the price of corn or the extent of the growing crop, and one winter about this time he made such a mistake, and was obliged to borrow money of William Price and mortgage the place to save his investment.

During that winter, Enoch did not worry about the cattle or the debt. They had been attended to; perhaps things would come out right. He had done the best he could. While he had some leisure time in the long winter, he might as well be doing something; so he turned his

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

attention to the spirits again. His theory grew upon him ; it was so full of explanation, so satisfactory. He explained it in long letters to his brothers and sisters in Ohio and Indiana, and other parts of the West. They replied at first in friendly, admonitory letters, which gradually grew shorter, then indifferent, and finally curt.

The man was enthusiastic and full of earnestness and repressed zeal. He conceived the desire to go back to his home in Ohio. He wanted to talk to his father and mother ; he wanted to show his newly found treasure, for he thought he had found something just as truly as the man who picks up a handful of diamonds from the bed of a stream is sure he has found value. Hannah tried to persuade him not to go. She felt sure he would be disappointed ; besides, she did not like to be left out there in the winter. But his desire was so great that he had to go and went.

The first morning after he reached home, the power of the spirit came upon him. The first thing he knew he was seized as in a fit of weeping, and began to cry and sob so that the people were frightened. They asked him what was the matter, but he told them he did not know. He walked about over the old place from room to room, wringing his hands and sobbing and moaning while the tears

THE VISIT HOME

ran down his face. It was as if the man were suffering greatly. The noise he made, too, was considerable. His eldest sister, Anne, followed him about and carefully closed the doors after him, to keep down the noise, and told some one to stay at the front door and not to let any of the neighbors come in. In fact, the Quaker quiet of that old Ohio household was disturbed as it had never been before.

What was the matter with the man! Grandmother Margaret, who was now grown pretty old, said that he had the spirit on him, that was all; said she had had quite similar experiences when she was a girl; that he wasn't really suffering anything; that it was only the spirit weeping and wailing. What puzzled her was to know *why* it had come. Just let him alone and it would leave him in due time. (And that old lady when she died had as many as seventy-five different gowns stored in the various closets and bureau-drawers of the house, many of them in very good condition and of very good quality. I cannot conceive why one should recall this fact now, unless it is to explain how the spiritual and the material can go side by side in the same individual as it was doing in Enoch.) She had prophesied correctly about him; he came out of it after awhile, though not until he had gone through the entire house, and out of the yard across to the woods pasture. There he remained alone for perhaps an

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

hour, and when the spirit left him, he came to the house. Grandmother Margaret had been right in this, too; he had not suffered a particle. He had wondered all the time what it was going to do with him next. He knew it was the spirit. And now he began to try to interpret its coming just as one would a dream. They talked of what it could mean, but they all knew well enough, and not even Enoch himself could bear to mention it. It was the spirit bewailing his separation from the family and the church. Enoch knew from that moment his mission would be in vain, but he had to go on and fulfil it.

He began to explain his spiritualism. He held circles; he spoke in meeting and everywhere. It was a failure;—not but that the spirit came: it did, and with power; but they said it was not a good spirit. They said it was not the Holy Spirit. His own people rather hinted there was something wrong with him. It is vain for a man in such a case to call up his life and his actions, his honesty, his godliness, his sobriety. Some said he was mad. When he spoke at the old Chester meeting-house, another scene as bad as that in Iowa or even worse than that took place; the people left the house. The old father even, a man of such peaceable disposition as to have charity for the devil himself, advised him to beware, to check the spirit and

THE VISIT HOME

control himself. At times Enoch had now the deepest humiliation after this visit, but even this humiliation only seemed to strengthen him more and more in his belief.

When he went home in the Spring, two famous Quaker preachers—Old Uncle Amos Hoag was one—came along; and before it was time to sell the cattle, Enoch took them in his spring-wagon to Minneapolis. It required over three weeks, and this was a time of infinite satisfaction to him. He lived in deep spiritual converse, night and day. One of the preachers sympathized with him, but the other thought he was on the wrong road; and when they returned, made his doctrines known to the meeting and urged on the investigation.

X

THE WOMAN PREACHER

PEOPLE speak of what religion is and what it is not. The following action was of a kind not unusual among the Quakers. Was it religion? There was a woman preacher who came to the meeting at Hesper, the village near which Enoch Willoughby lived. Her name was for a long time a household word, but the writer cannot recall it. It might have been Lucretia Mott, but that this well-known woman never went so far West. Was it Loisa Painter? or Alcinda Morrow? or Caroline Fawcett? or Calinda Place? or Elizabeth Owen? At all events it was a name that was a household word in all Quaker families; a name that was revered; a name that Enoch Willoughby would never hear twice before the horses would have been hitched up to go to meeting any day in the week in the midst of any employment, no matter how important; and then these same horses, under the same conditions, would have been at that woman's command to take her to her next stopping-place. She was truly a woman of God, if the expression is not too strong; a woman so

THE WOMAN PREACHER

spiritual and unselfish and highminded that the communities where she came dropped everything at her call, and considered their own business light in comparison to obeying her slightest wishes.

The woman, then, came to Hesper to preach; and there she had an impression so strong as to be irresistible, that she must go out and visit Enoch Willoughby and his family. She had heard something about him, but that did not prevent a certain strangeness in so strong an impression. The Friends advised her not to go; it was too far, seven miles away; a cold March wind was blowing. It made no difference. Her companion need not go, she said, but it had been borne down upon her with such force during the night to do this thing that she must obey. There was a word of the spirit which she felt she must be the instrument to convey to that family. And so she went out to the house. It was almost as though there was a radiance of goodness from that woman's countenance as she came; and when she met the family, the coolness of March seemed suddenly to change to the sunny warmth of June.

"Enoch," she said, as she took his hand at meeting him, "the spirit will not give me rest until I speak one word to thee."

She was really under the power as she spoke, and had felt it about her all the way out. Enoch

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

bowed his head over the woman's hand and was silent. She appealed to the same power that he worshipped ; here was one higher placed in the same household as he, and he must obey her. Here it was " thy Lord commanding my Lord." Hannah stood to one side ; the children were waiting for the greetings to be over that they might be noticed. The boys were afraid to lead away the horses to put them up for fear the noise of the moving wheels might disturb the words of that good woman. It was a beautiful scene, far removed from the materialism of our present age. It was like a scene from the dawn of the age of electricity, when scientists went around with magnetic needles in their pockets and talked of nothing else ; or a scene from the age of philosophy when men travelled miles and stood for hours discussing a new theory of pure reason and could not take time to sit down.

"Enoch"—the words of the woman were electrical ; there was something about them that was great with force and power—" make to thyself," she said, " no graven images. That is the word that has come upon me and will not leave me ; make to thyself no graven images."

And then she explained : " It is of thy mind and not of the spirit that thee says the power that is upon thee is this or that. Thee knows not whether it be departed spirits, or the Holy Spirit, or the very spirit of God ; then do not

THE WOMAN PREACHER

attempt to say. It is this that I have come to tell thee and to impress it upon thee."

Here as Enoch was about to speak she interrupted him.

"No, do not seek to convert this into a mere test of spirit communication. Thou and I need no such tests. I am aware of thy worth, and of that of thy family. I have seen the separation that has come upon thee and them; I have carried it in my mind for days and weeks; the spirit has been grieved within me, and I have had to visit thee. Now let us go in."

She took possession of everything about the house, and all recognized her authority in it. The horses now drove on to the stable; the children went about in whispers, and cautioned one another not to disturb Loisa. The best chickens were caught, the best dinner prepared that the place afforded; but no doubt Enoch was all the time thinking of Paul's vision on the way to Damascus, and of his own spiritual whipping in the corner.

After the dinner, when Loisa had rested and risen, he approached her and said: "Loisa, I am but one of the poorest vessels of the Lord, and through me it seems offence comes to many; but such as I am, I may not change, and what it is given to me to know, I may not forget."

The occasion, the deep respect he felt for the

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

woman before him, his recollection of Paul and his language, caught his very tongue and colored his style of expression :

“And what is brought upon me by the *power* to confess, ought I ever to deny? I have been visited by dreams and visions, many of them; and once, in the evening of a day on which I had pondered in my heart the name of the new sect that has given so great offence, and when I was sore with the fear of being called a follower of it, then as I leaned down to take up corn to put into the basket, a spirit came upon me, and beat me even into unconsciousness and death and told me throughout these words, ‘I will teach thee to deny me. I will teach thee to deny me.’ Since then I have never denied and can no longer deny; the will of the Highest must be done.”

Then followed a long, peaceful discussion; a searching of hearts and motives; at the end of which Loisa said she was relieved, and satisfied that the spirit that had come upon this family with such power was not of evil; and if it led to final separation, that would not much matter; there was something higher than the family, something higher than the church, higher even than the nation, in which we existed still as a brotherhood, and of which we should always be members.

She was about to go with these words of no-

THE WOMAN PREACHER

ble meaning on her lips, but Enoch had still something to say. They had warmed some brick to put at Loisa's feet on the way back, and had insisted on her taking an extra buffalo robe along. They could get it the next time they went to the village. But Loisa still waited :

"There is something more," she said. "Is it on thy mind or mine?"

She spoke as though listening to an inner voice.

Then, after a moment's pause, she answered her own question :

"It is on thine ; what is it, Enoch?"

Then Enoch began in this way :

"There is a subject, Loisa, about which I should like to know thy way of thinking. There is a young woman in my family, my wife's sister, Lyddie ; she is modest and not unattractive, and there are signs not to be mistaken that she has been chosen of the spirit. But Hannah says there are other signs not to be mistaken that a young man has chosen her ; and in this Hannah is most likely right, for she has a deep intuitive-ness in those matters, and there lies the trouble. This young man is not a son of spirituality ; he has never been borne into the world of power ; and it is exceedingly doubtful if he will ever be borne into it in this life, for he is of a family that has not often been visited of the spirit. What then should we, who know all these things, do?"

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Loisa asked then, after a minute's thought :
"Is the young man of the church?"

"He is a Friend," Enoch Willoughby replied,
"the son of William Price, who sits at the head
of our meeting. He is blessed with prosperity,
health, youth, and has true affection; but I fore-
see that this union will bring separation into
his own family, and may not itself lead to that
harmony that is necessary to happiness in mar-
riage. Can thee give us any light on this ques-
tion?"

Enoch used the ungrammatical thee of the
Quakers, and felt it would be an affectation for
him to use "thou" even to Loisa Painter, unless
he did so always at home.

Now there was a long silence. Loisa was not
a woman in whom ready words found careless
utterance. With a sigh she rose up finally and
said :

"I will ponder the matter well; and if any-
thing is given me to say, I will say it to thee, or
I will write it to thee, or I will come again and
bring it to thee. Of my own mind, however, I
am of the opinion that godly love is all powerful,
and must have his own way; and the question of
spirituality or unspirituality is not like putting
new wine into old wine skins, and thou must not
be too sure that the young man may not come
into the kingdom; and, as for separation, though
it is painful, it is the law of the world. Yet re-

THE WOMAN PREACHER

member, these are but my own words; they are not given or sent me, and have no special significance or power."

Then she went, and it seemed as if she drew the whole spirituality of the neighborhood away after her. It took hours and days for the place to seem natural and homelike again, and not desolate and lonely. This was the coming and going of the woman Quaker preacher. Would that such comings and goings were more frequent in our lives.

Lyddie meanwhile kept as firmly as she could to her determination not to love William Olney. She was loyal to her experiences and to the family in which she lived. She was womanly beyond her years and very thoughtful, and she felt that there might be trouble and harshness brought into the world if she and William Olney Price became too well acquainted. For that reason she met him as little as possible. The second time he came, she slipped away and went over to the Cadwalladers, and spent the day there. But she found that William Olney had not even asked for her, or mentioned her, and had again spent the time of his stay with her brothers.

Perhaps she was mistaken, and a little blush and shame came with the thought; and yet Lyddie was of that sensitive nature that reads thought almost by intuition. At any rate when

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

William Olney came again he found her; and she could not well shun him and be rude to him.

She said to herself if she could keep herself free, there could be no great harm done; that he would easily recover if there was any little attraction; as soon as his parents learned of his coming, they would find some means of stopping it; and besides, Lyddie would be altogether too saintly and spiritual for romantic purposes, if she had not had a little pride that William Olney Price had sought her out and paid her decided attention, more than to any other of the village girls.

His coming was a compliment to the family, and there is no use of denying that both Lyddie and Hannah were pleased; all the more so because they felt the humiliation that was coming upon them by Enoch's determined and persistent use of the name of spiritualism.

The sect had much about it that was not reputable even then. It was somewhat connected with necromancy and fortune-telling. Yet it was not as now, when, as soon as one says spiritualism, there flashes across the mind of the hearer a picture of planchette boards and dark cabinets and stage performances; of Georgia wonders; of people being miraculously bound and unbound for show; and of exposing the secret workings of a mysterious power for pay.

The Willoughbys would have thought that

THE WOMAN PREACHER

this sort of spiritualism had no connection with matters of the spirit, and for their part had nothing of it. Theirs was a spiritualism only of thought, of dreams and visions and experiences, that are found everywhere in the Bible. But in spite of their humiliation, in spite of the charitable interpretation of his theory by the woman preacher, in spite of everything, Enoch Willoughby was really a spiritualist, for he believed in the frequent communication with departed spirits; and by that name he had chosen his company, and he would have to go with them.

Hannah encouraged William Olney's attentions.

"It won't hurt thee, Lyddie," she said, "to show a little friendliness to the young man. He certainly hangs about as though he had lost the last friend in the world."

And secretly she wondered if his people knew of his coming there regularly every week, and whether he would have the courage to confess it. If he did so boldly, she would have a great deal of respect for him.

The Willoughbys were already thoroughly conscious of the kind of feeling that was growing up against them. And yet there was in Hannah's mind too much affection for the church, too little affiliation with the new belief, too much of the feeling with which she had left

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

her husband's bed in horror that one night, and lain apart from him in grief and pain of spirit, for her yet to feel anger or harshness toward the church of her fathers.

It is a question whether women are capable of going idea-mad at all; or if they are, whether it is not always as a result of love for a man who has this madness. The fixed idea may conquer the heart of a woman when it is incarnate in a beloved object, but it is at least a subject of doubt whether it ever wholly conquers her reason and intellect.

It was years before Hannah gave up and acknowledged the name of spiritualism. She had had no spiritual beatings in the corner to hasten her decision. She had, however, had the slow, daily process of a love that was better than caressing; that was always care-taking, self-sacrificing, and tender; that was controlled by reason, subordinated by faith, and carried on and up by a hope greater than this life.

And when she did yield, she had not the Christian charity that is without malice for all things. She grew into a good, genuine, hatred of all that looked down upon them and scorned them in their new faith.

It was she that learned to use finally all those radical expressions, called liberal, but in reality most illiberal, which Enoch was always checking her for. It was she that came to use the words

THE WOMAN PREACHER

“bigoted Christians” and “narrow-minded orthodox,” and later on cultivated the acquaintance of spiritual mediums as much from a feeling of pique as anything ; and influenced by her growing dislike and hatred of the old meeting, came even to dislike the Bible without reading it, and to say all sorts of things against it, ignorantly of course, but passionately.

And here, too, Enoch was always checking her and bringing her back to right ideas ; always remaining himself in moderation ; searching the Scriptures and his own experience, and cultivating right on that spirituality that was the very essence of his nature.

So now William Olney began to make love to Lyddie. He was not particularly sensible to her affected coolness. He told her he loved her. He did it in the most awkward and bashful way imaginable, and Lyddie began to reason with him. I would give anything if it were possible to reproduce that scene, with its singular styles of expression, and show to the eye and ear Lyddie “reasoning” with William Olney, trying to persuade him that it was not best they should know each other better than at present. But Lyddie trying to reason affection out only succeeded, it is fair to suppose, in more deeply reasoning affection in.

If William Olney succeeded in saying, “I love thee, Lydia,” he would be interrupted by Lyd-

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

die saying, "But thee knows well enough thee ought not to love me."

She would go on with the manner of a logician.

"I think I can show, nay, prove that thee ought not to do as thee says, and as thee most likely is mistaken in thinking thee does."

"I think thee will have a hard task, Lydia," we can imagine him saying.

"But my name is not Lydia," Lyddie said, and then continued with quite a discussion on the two pronunciations of the name, and drew from them an ingenious parallel between his people and hers.

"What is the difference, Lydia?" he asked her. He was willing enough she should say anything if she would only stay and reason on.

"I cannot quite explain it to thee," she said; "but *Lydia* is more set and formal, more like thy father at the head of the meeting, while Lyddie is like my brother-in-law down among the low benches."

"I think I understand thee, Lydia," he said; "and if thee wishes I will call thee Lyddie hereafter."

But he did not; he called her Lydia, and in spite of herself she began rather to like the change.

When he asked her again: "Lydia, will thee become my wife?" she replied, with the same calm, reasoning tone:

THE WOMAN PREACHER

"Oh, no, that would never do; thy people are the strictest of the orthodox and we are now worse than the Hicksites."

Then it was that William Olney explained his ecclesiasticism.

"Lydia, what have these names to do with the matter?" he argued. "I have never paid any attention to them; and orthodox, and Hicksite, and Spiritualist, and even Roman Catholic, have but an empty sound, as it were, in my ear. But if thee feels that thee can only love me, I am sure that all these matters can be determined in the right way and settled hereafter to the satisfaction of us all. Tell me but one thing, Lydia. Am I disagreeable in thy eyes; do I cause thee to want to go from me?"

"No, it is not that, William Olney," she said; "but suppose I should be 'controlled.'"

She said this with a spirit of mischief, but not altogether; for these people were not practising mere scientific experiment when they sat in the circle and waited on the spirit. There was about it in those days, and for Enoch Willoughby, there remained always, a deep religious significance.

"Does thee mean, suppose the spirit should come upon thee to preach?" he asked. "Does thee think that would offend me? Haven't I seen Caroline Fawcett preach in the meeting when she was not more than seventeen years

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

old; and Elizabeth Owen, likewise; and thy own sister, Hannah?"

"But this is different," Lyddie persisted; "suppose I should act in meeting as my brother-in-law, Enoch, did, and all the meeting should get up and go out and leave me, and I should be held by the spirit and made to speak on in an empty meeting-house?"

It was with a spirit of soberness and mirth combined that she went on.

"Yes, what would thee think of that. And then suppose everybody avoided me; and thought I had something evil about me; and called me harsh names and should even try me before the committee, as they have done Enoch; suppose they should go on and disown me from the meeting; and thy own father and mother should feel that I was possessed, and may be beside myself. What would thee think of that?"

There was something of conscientiousness, too, in the way she put these damaging suppositions.

"Or suppose I should wake up some cold morning, like the day Loisa Painter came to see us, and tell thee that the spirit had been with me, and compelled me to go and admonish some one for, let us say, whipping an innocent child, would thee let me go and may be even go with me thyself?"

THE WOMAN PREACHER

But she did not wait for an answer.

“And suppose these people should be offended at me, because I had been informed by the spirit of that which they were anxious to conceal ; and suppose they gave me threatening answers, and sent me offensive letters, and even attempted to drive me out of the neighborhood by secret threats ? ”

She seemed bound to make that side of the case as strong as possible.

“Thee must look at this side of it,” she said, finally. “I ought not to become thy wife. Only they of the spirit can know the difficulties it has to overcome, and I must follow what it is given to me to follow, and do what it is given me to do.”

It was a most singular courtship, but it is an incontestable fact that as William Olney sat and listened to this young girl, he did not take in the sense of her words at all. He was too sensible. He heard the music of her voice, that melting sweetness of sound that always accompanied her words.

He saw her eye quicken with life under the effect of her unusual inspiration to speech ; he saw how beautiful she was ; how mild and gentle and spiritual this sweet Quaker girl ; it had been growing on him right in the midst of the speech, the irresistible impulse to take her in his arms and kiss her lips. He felt that was

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

the only answer to give her. But he was not a man of impulses ; impulse was not strong enough in him to lead to immediate action.

And before he had time to act or reply, Lyddie had risen and said, " I will weigh well what thee has said to me, and I consider it an honorable question and worthy of a well-considered answer."

Then there was something said about William Olney's coming to one of their meetings and about returning to this subject again, and the young man went away.

As young William Olney went home after having learned when the spiritual meeting was to be held, he was wrapped up in the same illusion of love that is incomprehensible to one out of it, or in it either for that matter. He felt in his sedate way that he would go through fire and flood for this girl, and he would like to hear of any one writing her an offensive letter. Her words began to come back to him now. " Drive her from the neighborhood!" His wrath was slow to rise, but it rose in a great flame, give it time enough.

" And getting up in the cold and driving her miles away in the country in the early morning." He would like nothing better. They would wrap themselves up in a buffalo robe ; he wished this very moment they were on their way. And what was she going to do there in

THE WOMAN PREACHER

the country. It didn't make any difference to him what she was going to do. He would help her in whatever she undertook, and, thinking over the time the spiritual meeting was to take place, he rode on home.

XI

THE PRICE VISIT

IT is always disagreeable to follow the workings of a mind that has evil in it, and William Olney's father, William Price, though not by nature a bad man, to have prevented the marriage might have played easy with his conscience a little. There would have been no break with his son. There would have been nothing done outwardly that any one could have reproached him for, nothing as to which he could not easily have deceived himself into the belief that he was doing right. But he had two strong holds on the family of Enoch Willoughby; one, the mortgage on the farm; and the other, the investigation by the committee. No one could tell what he would have done in either case; but in some matters, the wish is father to the thought and even to the action; and there is no doubt he wished earnestly that something should cause Enoch Willoughby to remove from the neighborhood.

The mortgage and the church difficulty alone would probably never have been sufficient to bring this about, but a number of circumstances

THE PRICE VISIT

were quietly helping them ; in the first place, a kind of asthma, always worse in winter, so that Enoch began talking of removing South for his health ; when the wild geese went over in the fall, he often watched them and talked of following them. Then there was a natural inclination to change ; there was a good deal of the Western rover in him, and besides he had already removed enough times to have learned the advantages in those days of selling an old farm and buying a new one ; in this way he could start again without debt.

And there was the action and outcome of that brother, John, who had gone with him to Iowa, and who was mentioned in the first chapter of this story. He was married and had quite a large family of children, and they did not turn out well. The John Willoughbys lived still farther away from Hesper than Enoch did and in a rather rough neighborhood. They were not well off, though not dependent ; and withal very proud, with that kind of pride Enoch Willoughby always called beggar-pride ; that kind, for example, that likes to buy finery and make a show and is not too careful about paying its debts. Such people can be very exasperating some times, especially if they are relatives and one feels in any way responsible for them. This responsibility Enoch Willoughby did feel for his brother John, and this

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

gave him a great deal to think about ; one would have thought it sufficient to keep his mind off spiritualism a little, but he had plenty of thought apparently for that too. Later on we may have more to say about this family of Willoughbys. At present there is little to tell of them except the annoyance the children caused Hannah and Lyddie, by their sly hints and innuendoes at their belief in spiritualism. They used to come over frequently and liked to attend the spiritual meetings, more as though they were a kind of amusement than anything else ; and soon caught the humor of putting to common use all the terms that had come up among the spiritualists in a way that annoyed Hannah and even Uncle Enoch. And then, too, John kept borrowing money and using it up, resting on his oars, as Enoch called it. Not only that but he had gotten a bad reputation. Enoch Willoughby remained always a Christian spiritualist, and always said he was more a primitive Quaker than anything else. But John Willoughby took up with every new and wild theory that presented itself. He talked among other things on free love, so long and often that his wife Lisbeth threatened to leave him if he did not quit it ; and whether he had any religious belief or not, would have been a very hard matter to determine. But he got the name of atheist and infidel somehow or other. He was rather harsh

THE PRICE VISIT

in his attitude toward everything and everybody, and of course made enemies; and secretly in their hearts, perhaps Enoch and Hannah Willoughby wanted to go to a country where John and Elisabeth Willoughby and their family were not. One could not very much blame them, especially Enoch, whose whole desire was to right himself by good action in the eyes of a community who considered his belief disreputable.

There was still one other thing that helped make up the chapter of reasons why the Willoughbys talked so strongly of leaving the country. Enoch and Hannah had lately gone to visit the John Willoughbys. It was the custom in those days for families to make long visits to one another. In this visit, Enoch was "controlled" to go to a man who lived down the creek from John's house and admonish him for they never knew what exactly. Such action was not incomprehensible to such as he. They believed a spirit urged them to bring home to the mind of some person his wrongdoing or some such thing. At any rate, Enoch went in spite of Hannah's remonstrance. He had done such things before, and sometimes there had seemed to be good cause for such actions and good results to come from them. But in this case, Hannah thought he ought not to obey. Those people were rough, coarse

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

people, of no spirituality whatever, and there was no telling how they might take it. She was right, too, as the sequel proved. Enoch did not remember what he said to the man, but he made him very angry. Perhaps we ought not to say the man was a coarse, brutal, bullying man, for we might want to change it; but that would be the first impression of him. And the result of the visit was that Enoch Willoughby received not long afterwards an anonymous letter. It is not probable he would have paid any attention to it alone, but when taken in connection with all the other reasons for leaving that neighborhood, it must have had some weight. And now the family began to talk seriously of going South.

There are people who ease their consciences by after-acts; that is, they do some slight but irreparable injury, and then try to repair it; try so very hard that they throw the whole blame finally on the one injured. William Price had done nothing to cause the Willoughbys to leave the country, it is true, but he had certainly felt the desire that they should leave, and now when he heard they were going, he may have had a little compunction for an unjust thought. At any rate, he said to his wife, Rachel, that they ought to go out and visit the Enoch Willoughbys before they left the country.

THE PRICE VISIT

When he said this, Rachel looked at him earnestly; there was nothing in his face that betrayed his meaning. She thought it rather singular, but yet William had been out to the Willoughbys more than once on the investigating committee; it might be now a little friendliness was meant as an offset to this former apparent hostility.

William Price was not a man who laid bare all his motives for any action, and his family were not accustomed to inquire too closely into the whys and wherefores of what they were asked to do. Rachel Price then only considered what kind of visit he was thinking of making; whether they should send word they were coming, and stay to dinner; or whether the visit should be somewhat short and formal.

William said they would drive out in the carriage about ten o'clock some week-day morning; they would stay to dinner and make a friendly visit.

"And," he continued, "as for formality, by which I suppose thee means dress, it might show the greater good-will if thee should go looking well."

Rachel began to see what he meant. If there was a little dislike for them by the women of the Willoughby household, he was at least willing it should remain as great as it was, and though this was to be a friendly visit, it was to be

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

frigidly friendly ; that much she could pretty plainly see, and on the way out she learned more. William told her that he had it in mind some time during the day, either before dinner or after, there would be found an occasion for her, Rachel, to be with Lyddie alone ; and she might find opportunity of letting her know how dear a son was to a mother, and how terrible a thing a separation between them would be. She might impress upon her mind how set "father" was in his ways of thinking, and how surely the father and son would be forever separated also ; and if the girl had mercenary motives, but they did not give her credit for any such, yet it might be just as well to let her know that in case of a marriage against his father's will, William Olney would remain without any share in his father's property.

In fact this visit was the result of the deepest kind of calm meditation. William Price was convinced, from certain indications of late, that it would be of little use to try to influence the young man. They must try to affect Lyddie ; this was the real object of the visit. In this way people not infrequently use their reputation for faults of character to further their own ends. And so the visit was made.

This was not by any means a Loisa Painter visit. When the carriage was seen coming, there was a great flutter of excitement. Who

THE PRICE VISIT

could it be? was the first question, and were they coming here, the next. Then when it was seen to be William Price and his wife, and that they were coming in, the question was what could it be for?

"It is something about William Olney, Lyddie," Hannah said to her, "thee may be sure of that."

And Lyddie was sure of it. Could it be possible they had come out of real friendliness, because *he* had wanted them to become better acquainted? She did not believe this; she instinctively felt the visit was hostile to her. Lyddie's touch of spirituality had given her an insight into character, great control over herself and a right estimation of the importance or unimportance of little things; so that in a moment she was calm, less flurried and fluttered than her sister Hannah, not at all discomposed at the sight of Rachel's heavy silk dress or rich Quaker bonnet with its little fringe of expensive lace.

She went out with Hannah to greet the Prices; she it was who sent some one to find Enoch, who was about the place; and had a boy put up the horses. Then she left Hannah to talk with the visitors while she proceeded to make the first arrangements for dinner.

If they had intended to overawe Lyddie and frighten her, they had plainly failed. She was

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

only a modest young woman, but there was something about her that Rachel did not quite understand. She had thought she would find that occasion to speak to her *before* dinner; may be she would find an excuse to go out into the kitchen or into the garden where she was, but now she rather concluded to put it off until after dinner. There would then be time enough.

But after dinner—the dinner was one of those quiet Quaker dinners, preceded by the usual silent blessing, in which Enoch's arm was observed to give one or two singular jumps as though the spirit even then was ready to come upon him—after dinner, Lyddie appeared in so neat a garb, so plain and Quaker-like and becoming, that Rachel Price felt a little pain in her heart at what she knew she had to do. She could not help looking at Lyddie's wavy brown hair, curtained down her forehead, and tied in a Grecian knot at the back of her head—it was very becoming to her. Her cheeks were ruddy and her complexion warm and rich; and whenever she spoke there was a little something about her voice that thrilled Rachel Price. Her language was good and grammatical, and Rachel noticed she said “you” when addressing her and William, while she said “thee” to Hannah and Enoch and others of the family.

William Price and Enoch, of course, talked of religion, and were deep in the discussion;

THE PRICE VISIT

Hannah and Rachel were speaking of various people they knew, and Lyddie was trying to be attentive to each conversation, but was interested plainly in the religious discussion and had difficulty in keeping the run of Rachel's and Hannah's talk. It was now that Rachel hoped she might get an opportunity of speaking to Lyddie, but Lyddie was so plainly following the discourse of the men that Rachel felt a little embarrassed. Lyddie was not like a timid girl. She was a young woman of high mind; Rachel reproached herself once for allowing the thought to cross her mind, but she could not altogether blame William Olney. There was nothing about the young woman that could be reproached. She was of an old and respectable family of Quakers on both sides; but she was a spiritualist, and some said she was a medium. It was awful. Of course you could not see anything of it to look at her, but to think of it! Rachel shuddered at the thought and determined that she would carry out what she had come to do. But look as she would, she could see no way of finding a right opportunity to do so; she saw she would have to make the opportunity. She would have to call the young woman by name, attract her attention from the men's conversation and ask to speak a word with her privately. Of course, every one would know what it was about. She would have to

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

get up and go out with her before them all. It was a very difficult task; she trembled at it, but she must carry it out.

And Lyddie, too, felt that something was coming, but she had said to herself, "Let them open the subject."

She noticed that Rachel was uneasy, and when finally she looked over to her and called her by name, Lyddie arose and asked: "Would you like to speak to me?"

The "you" sounded a little strange and harsh to Rachel Price, accustomed as all the members of the meeting were to addressing one another with "thee" and "thou." With this Lyddie led the way out of the room and left in it a blank silence. There was silence outside, too, for Rachel, in spite of herself, could not begin.

After waiting awhile, and seeing her embarrassment, Lyddie began very calmly, with not a flutter in her voice: "You wish to speak to me of your son, William Olney. It doesn't require any special intuition to perceive that. I am listening. If thee has anything to say, Rachel Price, say it and I will heed it."

She must have felt a touch of emotion that forced her to use the familiar address. Her breath came quick and fast, but she had so gotten the start of Rachel Price, that that good woman could not find words to express herself.

Lyddie finally spoke again.

THE PRICE VISIT

"Thee can at least tell me whether that is the subject on thy mind." She still waited, but Rachel did not yet speak. "If it is, and thee is fearful lest he have asked me to become his wife, let me set thy mind at rest. He has done so twice, and I have attempted to convince him each time that he was wrong, and have as mildly and yet firmly as possible refused him."

"But why did thee refuse him?"

Rachel spoke before she thought, and surprised herself by asking that question.

And then a most singular thing happened. The mother was led into praising her son to the very woman whom she did not want him to marry. There was an earnestness and simplicity in Lyddie's words about him that carried conviction; and when she spoke of the difference between her nature and William Olney's, and manifested withal such a desire to find the best in the character of the young man and make the most of it, no one would have thought of any personal interest she might have had in the matter. For Rachel on her part it was a good deal such a conversation as she might have carried on with the principal of a school, to which she had taken her young son with the expectation of leaving him there to be educated.

"Set thy mind at rest, Rachel Price," Lyddie said, finally. "It has not been difficult to refuse

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

your son twice, for I do not love him, and can and will refuse him if he should ever do me the honor to ask me again."

Then she led the way back to the room they had left. She was entire master of the situation, calm and quiet; she even tried to start a general conversation. But the others were too much interested to engage in it, knowing what had happened. An awkward silence ensued.

In order to understand what broke it one would have to remember what kind of character Hannah's was, what kind of life she had led at old Enoch Willoughby's in Ohio, constantly weeping at old Margaret's harshness and eccentricities. Old Margaret was just the kind of person one would like to be able to call Lady Margaret, if there were a system of titles in this country—high and mighty, lordly, proud, and peculiar; and young Hannah was nothing but a bundle of enthusiasms, quick, sensitive, imaginative, easily passing from tears to laughter. She reminded one of some old illustrations in a copy of Shakespeare, where the women seem to be all neck, with heads like lilies, turning on long and slender stems. Her kind of nature does not have the control of itself that Lyddie's had. In some persons a fountain of suppressed emotion spreads out into a placid surface of profound reasoning; in others it bubbles up and froths and foams in hysterical activity.

THE PRICE VISIT

Of the latter kind was Hannah. She had been repressing her feeling all day ; in fact for a long time. She was not yet a spiritualist, had never acknowledged the name ; and might just as easily have been aroused to take the other side of the question, and hysterically plead for her old Quaker faith as for this. But now, to-day, something had set her all aflame ; most of all her pride was hurt. They were not good enough for the Prices, weren't they ? The Prices had come out here to show them that, to overawe them with silk dresses and fine bonnets. She felt Lyddie's humiliation a thousand times more than Lyddie had herself felt it.

It is under this kind of passionate excitement that we say and do things that shape and fashion our whole future lives. While Lyddie was out Hannah had sat like one almost in a frenzy, and when she came in she went over to her and said aloud :

"What did she say to thee, tell me, for I will know ?"

"Hannah, Hannah," Enoch Willoughby spoke up, for he saw in Hannah's eyes a look that showed she was becoming hysterical, "calm thyself, there is nothing the matter, remember."

But Hannah burst forth.

"So there is nothing the matter, is there ? I think there is everything the matter." She em-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

phasized the everything. "We may not be in a den of wolves, but we are in a den of canting hypocrites."

The scene was painful, distressing.

"Thee, thee, William Price, I mean thee."

Her voice rose high and piercing, and she walked out into the room, her tall form swaying back and forth.

"And thee, Rachel Price, the wife of a hypocrite who have eaten our bread and pretended friendship and have hatred in your hearts and scorn for us whom you think the lowest of the low." It was a fearful tirade, and no one could stop her.

Lyddie tried to pacify her.

"No, I will have my say!" Hannah almost shrieked; "let them feel it once, let them go and scorn us; let them turn their backs on the spirit and blaspheme; that's what you are, blasphemers, who deny the spirit, unless it comes in the oily tongue of worldly hypocrisy, fine clothes and set seasons; for shame upon you, go your way and leave the house that has been visited by far better than you. And may your souls dry up and wither away spiritually for the want of just such visitation. You are of the earth, earthy, earthy . . ."

Then she lost control of herself, and began to babble in a strange way, without intelligible words.

THE PRICE VISIT

They took her to her bed and induced her to lie down, where after a time she grew calm.

Meanwhile Enoch Willoughby had spoken to the Prices.

“Hannah is not responsible for her words now;” he said, “she is beside herself from emotion, and will herself be sorry that she has acted thus. It was not Christian, and should not have been. Whatever is best to do about the young man and woman, I am sure, William, thee will find out to do. It has already concerned me much and I have even counselled with others about it, but have not known just what to say.”

And Lyddie, too, had remained perfectly calm, and had done the honors of the house, excused her sister as well as she could, saying she was excitable and had felt all along more than any one else the reproach which the new sect was bringing upon them, and her feeling had now gotten control of her.

It was just as she bade them good-by that Rachel Price, moved by Lyddie's seemliness under these trying circumstances, and by her calmness and placid Quaker beauty and unruffled friendliness, could not resist the impulse, after she had stepped into the carriage, to bend down toward Lyddie and take her hand and say, as she pressed it:

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

“Thou art a good woman, Lydia, thou art a good woman.”

Lyddie had it on her tongue to make some sharp reply, to draw back her hand, to let her own pride appear; but she checked herself, or something checked her; for a long time it was a mystery to her what it was that held her back and let these remain the last words of that momentous Quaker visit to the Willoughbys: “Thou art a good woman, Lydia, thou art a good woman.”

XII

FACING IT OUT

LYDDIE'S promise given unasked, as it had been, did not seem to bring Rachel or William Price the satisfaction they had anticipated. They both felt not a little ashamed, and both feared that the worst was still to come. It would never be a marriage, Rachel Price felt sure of that; but the possibility even was not pleasant. It was true she could not help rather liking the young woman. If only there was nothing wrong with her belief, she could easily have thought of her as a daughter-in-law. But if she was a *medium*! Oh, dear, no! That would never do; never, never, never?

And William Price's dissatisfaction came from the thought of what William Olney would do, and of what he would say of their visit, which was plainly an intervention in his affairs. He dreaded the outcome a little, but he knew very well what he should say by way of excuse. They had only made a friendly visit, where they had been berated, and spoken to in a harsh and unchristian manner, for something they had neither said nor done. It was not William

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Price's way to go directly at anything. Even now he was beginning to blame the Willoughbys for the visit, and all its outcome. He had almost made himself believe that they had invited them out, and had then turned upon their guests and reproached them and shamed them. It was very pleasant to have this kind of accommodating, politic conscience.

As for the Enoch Willoughbys things were fast becoming worse. They now felt that the estrangement between them and the church was almost incurable. Hannah's tantrum had flown in the face of all Enoch's pacifying attitude, and what would become of William Olney's and Lyddie's case was now a question.

There would have been perhaps no question about it, but Lyddie was impressionable and inclined to give great heed to her impressions. What had been the reason, when speaking with Rachel Price, as she bade her good-by, that she had not been able to say what rose to her lips? It was one of those little things quite in keeping with all her surroundings and experiences. She thought she must have been "held back" from doing it; and, as she thought over it, she no doubt magnified it until she came to believe it was a leading, a spiritual opening that she must obey. That was, perhaps, the first time she had ever asked herself if she cared for the young man. She noticed now

FACING IT OUT

that the words of his mother had been especially pleasing to her. In spite of her impulse to retaliation a few moments before, they had soothed her and flattered her.

Where minds are highly wrought upon, a little word often makes a deep impression, and these words, "Thou art a good woman, Lydia," would not leave her mind. What if William Olney persisted in his attention to her, and she found she did really care for him; would it be possible for her to remove Rachel's prejudice? Such thoughts will float across a person's mind, all out of time and place as they are, and so they flashed across Lyddie's, and then she blushed, alone as she was, and put them resolutely away.

But the fact of it is, any one can see, that this visit had done the very opposite of what it was intended to do. Lyddie had hardly had the thought before that she could love William Olney Price; and the mere mention of his people had been like a cold shock to her, but now she felt that she knew them better. She had less fear of them, and might even win their liking; and William Olney had certainly demeaned himself well.

It was, we think, from this visit of the Price's that Hannah's break with the Quakers really dated. Not until after this, did she begin to use rather harsh expressions, and Enoch, in opposition to her, to urge charity. *She* wanted no

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

charity; she did not *propose* to be smitten on one cheek and then turn the other. That was exactly Enoch Willoughby's doctrine. He liked to pour coals of fire and preach non-resistance. Hannah turned right about in the matter of Lyddie and William Olney, and said she did not want her sister to marry a "canting orthodox." And Enoch would every time patiently correct her by saying she should not allow herself such expressions; they led the soul to malice, for it was that which cometh out that defiles; and even if the Prices had not had the best intentions toward them, that was nothing against the other members of the meeting. As for William Olney, that they could not decide; they must wait and see what the young man would do.

Enoch still persisted in reading and studying the Bible, and believing and talking spiritualism; and Hannah now began to oppose him. She said she had no patience with him; she didn't know what he *did* believe any longer. Was he going to be a Quaker, and believe in the Bible and stick to it? If so, well and good; then she'd know what to do. They'd take to going to meeting again, and she would face it out with the Prices; they had friends and plenty of them; they could drop the name of spiritualism. She would encourage the Price match with Lyddie. Enoch could keep down his jerking spirits in meeting, and they would go in for worldliness for good

FACING IT OUT

and all; but if he was going to be a spiritualist, to be one, and take the consequences. He had had his beating in the corn-crib, that he was so fond of telling about;—for her part she believed it was mostly imagination, and thinking about old Paul's vision on his way to Damascus;—but, if he was going to follow its teaching, he had better follow it; hunt up the spiritualists and go with them; leave the meeting and the orthodox, and quit talking about the Bible and studying it. He would be a Bible crank, anyway, if he kept on. She didn't believe in doing things by halves and so forth.

Enoch's answer to her tirades was good; it indicated the whole character of the man.

"Hannah, I am not going to try to *make* anything be one way or the other," he would say. "I am going to try simply and earnestly to find the truth, and then to follow it and obey it as well as I can."

About this time a change came over Lyddie. She seemed not to like so much to listen to Enoch's discussions on spiritualism, or to hear Hannah's somewhat cutting expressions against the Quakers. She became a little more Quakerish in some ways, and Hannah told her she had better wear a Quaker bonnet and a neckerchief and be done with it. As for herself, Hannah said, she was not going to wear *her* Quaker bonnet any more till she learned, if she ever did,

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

which way Enoch went. If he went back to the Quakers, she'd wear it; and, if he became a spiritualist for good, she'd send it to her sister, Ruth, in Ohio.

About this time, too, Enoch went to a meeting of spiritualists, urged on by Hannah's desire to meet some people with whom she thought they might be more in sympathy. But it did not turn out well. The "manifestations" were mostly in the form of "performances," and that, too, for pay, which was contrary to all Enoch's ideas. Some of the performances were plainly frauds, and Hannah thought they should now certainly know what they were going to do. But here, as in the former case of the Prices and the Quakers, Enoch was consistent with himself, and maintained that because some of them were frauds was no sign that they all were and that we must not judge a whole body by some of its members only.

Hannah now declared that she would go back to the Quakers and be a Quaker.

"Nobody can tell what thee's going to do, or be," she said; "thee's queer, Enoch. The first thing thee knows we won't be anything at all."

This was the direction then things now took for some time. Hannah determined that they should be and remain Quakers. She made up her mind that she would talk to Lyddie about

FACING IT OUT

William Olney Price, and encourage the match. She would have Enoch go back to meeting, and have him try to keep still there; she said she knew he could if he only made up his mind to; and if he would quit reading the Bible so much, and quit trying to interpret it his own way, she thought they would be all right and come out very well; and in all this she had considerable influence.

They went back to the meeting and Hannah "faced it out" with the Prices. She was somewhat ashamed to look them in the face at first as she thought of how she had berated them at her house, but she finally got over it, and began again to feel a little at home in the meeting. Enoch, too, found that he was able to keep himself from going under the influence in the meeting if he tried hard enough, and kept his mind constantly on outward things; and for a time now all went on smoothly as formerly, with the exception of some trouble over the *name* of spiritualist, which Enoch persistently used; and about the doctrine, too, which he as persistently theorized on and argued about. But for a long time now the spiritual meetings must have been mostly dropped, and the speaking both at home and in meeting pretty much discontinued.

There must have been some meetings, however, for William Olney was at one or two; but

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

nothing startling or very unusual happened; that is, nothing very strange to a Quaker boy, who had been accustomed all his life to seeing people speak when under the influence of the spirit. Lyddie was not "controlled." In some way when she sat in a circle with William Olney and their hands touched, the influence did not affect her.

Enoch Willoughby, of course, wrestled with the spirit as often as he would allow it to come upon him. But he began to see the impossibility of doing anything, that is of converting any one, by direct inspiration. His tests too were often fallacious, and he turned more and more to argument. He did say, however, that Hannah, who had once or twice spoken in meeting in a very pleasant voice and with a very ready and easy flow of words and no unseemly movements of the muscles of her face, was not speaking through the spirit at all, but was most likely doing it herself; and Hannah had retorted that she considered it better to do it herself than to act so as to become the laughing-stock and ridicule of the community.

And so it was some considerable time before William Olney began to plead his cause again, or learned of that visit of his father and mother to the Willoughbys.

Lyddie was not all spirituality by any means.

FACING IT OUT

She enjoyed life as all young girls did in those days and ought to do at all times.

She could sing and she could dance; she could ride beautifully on horseback; she went to various parties and country dances, spelling bees, and other entertainments. She even taught little James, the boy who had the whipping for speaking disrespectfully of his father, how to dance the Quaker schottische. They called it a Quaker schottische so that they might be allowed to dance it.

Once when she was giving such a lesson, and apparently in great spirits, the boy noticed that she was crying. He asked her what was the matter, but she would not answer him. He coaxed her to tell, but Lyddie hushed him up, and distracted his attention by proposing some other amusement. When they came into the house again, the boy told out that Lyddie had been crying.

There was no one in the world except his father whom the boy liked as he did Lyddie; his mother, of course, but in a different way. His mother and he understood each other when she petted him, smoothed his hair, patted his cheek, or when he threw his arms around her neck, or went to her for consolation when he was hurt—that was all clear. But his affection for Lyddie and his father was different; here was something mysterious; here was

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

generally no caressing; nothing a boy could understand, but nice words always and not a few about God and the spirit world.

The boy came to think that spirits were the cause of everything, especially of everything bad, and he hated them. He had heard that they once drove his father out from home into the wilderness—that meant for him over into the big woods back of Lars Johnson's—and then had driven him around and beaten him for all those six weeks he was away, and made him grow white and thin and blacker-haired than ever. He knew now his father did not have anything to do with it; it had been only the wicked spirit. His imagination pictured the spirit out in all his awfulness, with a rope around his father's neck and a great ox-goad, driving him about among the wild grape-vines and tangled blackberry briars and thorn-bushes, and beating him. It is no wonder that he hated the spirit, and felt now, in an uncertain way, that it was at the bottom of this trouble of Lyddie's, and was making her cry. He clinched his little fist tightly, and longed to be a man. He would show then what he would do. And in those spiritual meetings, when Enoch was controlled, and supposed he was teaching great truths frequently there was a little boy peeping cautiously about to see if he could not get a glimpse of the spirit somewhere, and find out where it

FACING IT OUT

had hold of him, and what it was doing. He used to think he would like to stick pins into its legs, and drive it away.

And yet that father had had a thousand dreams about that boy. He had thought he would grow up and become a learned man; carry on his teachings, and justify him and his doctrines in the eyes of the great world, may be; and so half the time we are unconscious of the real effect of our personalities upon those about us.

In this kind of life Lyddie met other young men than William Olney Price; one Aaron Melwin, especially, accompanied her frequently. He possessed all the qualities that are pleasing to a young girl. He was handsome, of pleasant address and gentle voice, and was always in demand. He may not have had very much will of his own, but this lack perhaps is not most noticeable in young men. We know what he became; but yet the very qualities that go to make a man die in the ditch sometimes are the ones that make him the most agreeable and even in some instances the most attractive character while he is out of it.

Lyddie ought to have married William Olney Price in spite of everything; they were intended for each other. She was spiritually minded and he was practical; together the balance would have been well preserved in

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

either character, and they loved each other. That is, Lyddie had certainly given some indication of finally caring for William Olney. But when he came again after that visit of his father and mother, she was changed. At first she avoided him, and when he did compel her to speak with him, she was reserved, and kept the subject of conversation safely away from love-affairs. But when William Olney finally forced her to listen, she thought it best to tell him everything, and did so, though when he learned of this visit and its intention, and gathered all that Lyddie had said and promised, it made no difference.

"But, Lyddie," he persisted, "the main question is, Is it true that thee does not, and cannot love me."

Lyddie did not reply. She could not, she had nothing to say. She probably only showed her embarrassment.

"I think I perceive that it is not the entire truth," William Olney said, and in a moment more he would have taken the girl in his arms and kissed her.

But immediately she drew herself up, and her whole dignity and strength of will returned as she said, "William Olney, the question thee urges is of no importance. I have promised thy mother not to become thy wife, and whether what I said further to her at that time was

FACING IT OUT

rightly understood is no matter. I have promised, and thee may be sure I will keep my promise."

This carried the war into Africa, so to speak, for as William Olney went away he said, "I bid thee farewell, Lydia, but thee may expect another visit from my mother soon, perhaps this very day; and on that visit she will ask thee to retract thy promise, and thee will do it then, will thee not?"

But Lyddie did not answer directly.

"Better let it drop, William Olney," she said at last; "thy mother's will might be conquered; and, indeed, she did say some beautiful words to me that took away the unpleasantness of the visit from my mind. But thy mother's will depends upon thy father's and that is probably deeper and stronger. He will never consent to thy union with a spiritualist, and thee may be sure Enoch Willoughby will be one as long as the recollection of his vision lasts."

"But thee, Lydia," he said, "thee is not Enoch Willoughby; thee is not even his daughter; why should his opinion so affect thee?"

"William Olney," she said then, irrelevantly, "there is such a thing as a great spiritual separation; the words of that good woman, Loisa Painter, are in my mind now as I speak to thee; and this separation comes upon those

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

who love one another, whether in the family, in the church, or in the State. This separation is painful and I would not be the cause of it between thee and thy people. Be sure I shall never be the cause of it; until thy father and thy mother as well as thyself desire me to become a member of thy family, I shall never give my consent to do so."

So William Olney went quietly home and spoke to his mother. She, poor woman, had been expecting this for some time, but could do nothing.

"It all depends upon thy father," she said. And when William Olney asked her to present the matter to him, she replied she had already done so, and he insisted that William Olney should never marry a spiritualist. Then William Olney went to see his father in the library.

There was no violent discussion, no voice raised above a conventional pitch. The son knew and the father knew the meeting would be in vain. Old William Price had never yielded to anything. You might as well expect that storm which is caused by the advent of unknown causes far in the upper air above the regions of earth to be checked in its onward progress and driven away by a summer whirlwind.

In William Price's mind, Enoch Willoughby and all connected with him were going straight to the devil. That may be a somewhat harsh

FACING IT OUT

way of expressing it, but that was the substance of it ; and he was himself doing the only right thing in preventing this degrading union. There was not a worldly thought about it — we must give him credit for that. In spite of his closeness in money matters, and desire, too, that his family might be continued in prosperity from generation to generation, he would not seriously have objected to William Olney marrying the poorest girl in the neighborhood ; but the other thing, *never*. It did not require the repetition of that word “never” in his case ; once was sufficiently emphatic.

The two men rose, calm, moderate, and were about to separate. But William Olney could not go without at least justifying Lyddie.

“Thy will, father, in this case, is absolute, for the young woman has made her own to depend upon it. She will not be the cause of bringing separation into my family.”

“And in that,” William Price had the heart to answer, “she is perfectly correct ; it would be wrong in her to think otherwise.”

Then William Olney said :

“Father, I cannot hope to bend thy will any more than I can hope to change her mind ; I shall not try to do either, for that would be to change her against her conscience and thee against thine. But I know that the young woman is not averse to me, and I love her,

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

and I shall never marry another woman but her. Consider well what thou art doing. We are a bloodless race, cold and not easily moved to passion of any kind; my sister is almost past the age when she is likely to be sought by young men. The young woman of whom I speak is the only one that has ever attracted me or is ever likely to do so. Thy house will be a childless house, father, and thy race become extinct in this generation if thee persists in thy determination of this day. And as for her belief, father, there is very little difference between that and our own."

But here the elder Price interrupted him.

"Thee is speaking of that of which thee knows nothing; the religion which these people profess is not a religion at all, but a base and grovelling superstition; it is even worse than that, for it is a godless superstition. They would raise the sorcery and divination and witchcraft of the Scriptures into the place of the crucified Saviour. What they worship is the power of darkness; and what one worships he finally assimilates himself unto, and becomes identical with. It is not a light matter with me, and I am not taking an inconsiderate step. There is the attraction of the broad road to destruction in this very thing, and those who have once entered it are sure to follow it to its end. Sad as it would be for me to see all my

FACING IT OUT

hopes blasted, to think that my race would die in this generation, I had far rather it would be even so than that I should ever be looked back upon as the father of a godless race of unholy and blaspheming spiritualists; of mediums who are no more than necromancers and sorcerers; who practise their mysterious incantations and wicked witchcraft in dark closets and secret cabinets; who prate of free love and atheism and infidelity, but say very little, I assure thee, of Christ and Him crucified. Be sure, oh, be sure I shall never consent to receive as a daughter of my family a person of that accursed superstition."

These words were all kept in that same low, quiet tone that clearly indicated the thoughts were the result of reason, not passion; they were thus forcible and persistent.

But William Olney, too, was of the same quiet persistency as his father, and he had not exhausted all his reasoning yet.

"Father," he said, "Lydia has asked me to be present at their meetings, for she is a young woman absolutely without deception; and, though she did not say so, I felt that she desired that I should see and know all they did at those meetings, and understand as far as possible all their position in regard to this new faith. I have been present at them, and saw nothing that was startling or even so very sur-

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

prising, except that Enoch Willoughby acted and spoke as he is accustomed to do in meeting, perhaps a little more freely; and in Lydia there was no change whatever, though she tells me that the spirit has occasionally come upon her."

"Did she say the Holy Spirit?" William Price asked.

"I don't think she is accustomed to saying that," William Olney replied; "and there might be an assumption on her part in doing so; but I warrant thee, father, no one who knows her as I do would ever think of an unholy spirit coming upon her, for she is a good woman, father, a thoroughly good woman. I do not mean to exaggerate in this respect, but I trust thee will not attempt to say that she is otherwise, for that statement I feel I could not properly listen to, even from thee, father. As nearly as I can gather from her manner of description, she has been influenced not differently from Caroline Fawcett or Caroline Wooton, whom thee knows in our meeting; each of whom I remember to have spoken in meeting under the influence many years ago, when they were quite young; and Loisa Painter, who was here recently, was guided in much the same way."

"Oh, but that was entirely different," William Price answered; "these were holy women, guided by the spirit of God and of truth; but the other is the spirit of falsehood and deception

FACING IT OUT

and darkness. Beware, I say, oh, my son, beware how thou art being led astray. Satan himself may be clothed as an angel of light, and come in form to deceive the very elect. Later thou wilt find that these so-called spiritual mediums are held by Indian spirits and lying spirits, that prophesy falsely and turn the soul to its own destruction. Thou wilt find that their followers are mostly fortune-tellers and gypsies, wanderers, straying about without place or portion on this earth; the very lowest of the low; cheating and deceiving; or else unbalanced in mind, with strange eyes and long, wizard-like hair. Oh! my son, I would rather see thee dead and buried quietly and sacredly in the church-yard of thy fathers, and feel that thy place with thy Redeemer hereafter was sure, than to see thee the father of a family of children in whom I felt the taint of heretical and demoniacal blood existed; and I thank merciful heaven that the woman of whom thee is thinking has been allowed that ray of light and wisdom that she has made her acceptance of thee to depend upon my consent, for that thee may be sure thee will never have."

"Well, father"—there was the same quietness and lack of all outward signs of passion—"I have been reasoning on this matter a great deal; I am sure thee is wrong, and I am equally sure it would be impossible to convince thee of that fact—as difficult as it would be for thee to con-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

vince me that Lydia O'Mara is not as good and true as she is in my eyes pleasing. But this is the course of my reasoning: if I follow thy counsel and put her away from my mind, I shall have no feeling of friendliness toward thee henceforth, thee may be sure; I shall regret all my life that I have her not with me as a companion, and she—if I am right in thinking that she is not without affection for me—will be rendered unhappy, I cannot but hope, for a long time; so that in every way I look at it, this action is bad; equally bad for thee and our family; bad for me and bad for her, whose welfare I desire to consider in the matter. On the other hand, if I should oppose thee, and marry Lydia, I am sure my mother would soon become reconciled and my sister also; all but thee; thou wouldst, of course, hold out, as it is thy nature. But Lydia, I trust, would be happy with me, and I should be confident of happiness in her society. That leaves, then, all of us better for the union except thee, and thee would not be worse off, for I assure thee the separation between thee and me will be equally great in both cases; hence my conclusion is that I should use every effort in my power, first, to convince thee I am right; and, next, to do what I consider right, whether thou art convinced, or dost remain unconvinced."

The conversation was really over; there was

FACING IT OUT

little more to be said. The father added he should never give his consent. The son as respectfully as possible reasserted that he should do his best to marry the girl with or without his father's consent, and the two men separated.

William Olney regretted afterward that he had not made clearer to his father that Lyddie was not a medium in any bad sense of the word, and that he had not laid greater stress on the general intelligence and honesty and good connection of the family, and also on the fact that Lyddie was not a daughter of the Willoughbys, and so ought not to be reproached with their belief, if their belief was a cause of reproach. But he knew it would all have been of no use. He knew that the more good he told of these people to his father, the more dangerous his father would consider them. The one drachm of evil in the family, in his father's estimation, was more than sufficient to leaven the whole lump.

He knew that his father was prejudiced with a deep, set prejudice that could not be uprooted.

If he had told him how earnest and conscientious a student of the Bible Enoch Willoughby was, his father would simply have replied, "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."

And now that visit had aroused his father's personal hostility. It was all too bad, but his own conclusion had been reached, and he should follow it. He loved Lyddie and he should make

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

her his wife. That would cause a break in the family probably, but they could both spend their time in doing their best to heal the break. He even thought with some satisfaction how they would go about it to do this.

But first he must overcome Lyddie's objection, and this he found difficult.

"Thee must not think, William Olney," she said the next time he saw her and was again reasoning with her, "it is because I have once said to thy mother I should not accept thee; to persist from that cause would be naught but obstinacy; and, if it were best, I should try to reconcile my conscience to breaking that resolution; but there is something more, the reasons which caused me to form that resolution still exist. I cannot and will not become the cause of separating thee from thy parents."

There was something so unalterably fixed, something so much more forcible than mere hasty resolution in her way of speaking, that the young man felt a sinking at the heart. It was then no use; he had been deceiving himself with false hopes.

A feeling of despair came over him. He only said: "I see thee does not love me, Lydia;" but it was so touching to hear him that the girl did what she ought not to have done. We cannot avoid giving comfort sometimes, even when we know such comfort is wrong.

FACING IT OUT

“If it would be any satisfaction to thee hereafter, William Olney, any healing for thy wounded pride, if perchance thy pride is wounded, thee may know that in this thee has been mistaken.”

She could go no farther ; a blush overspread her face. She knew in a moment she had done what she ought not to have done. She should not have told him ; she immediately made up her mind not to see him again. She rose and held out her hand to bid him good-by.

Then she learned, what she should have known before, that human nature is stronger than Quaker reserve.

He took her hand and drew her to him forcibly and kissed her again and again, and would not release her. She could not struggle against him, and for a moment her head rested on his breast ; but only for a moment. Then she drew herself up and freed herself from him. Something like a sob escaped her, but she controlled herself, and bade him good-by ; and he, poor fool, happy in the intoxication of that first embrace, went home with his Quaker heart thoroughly warmed with that happiest experience that comes in a lifetime.

XIII

PEACE TO OLD LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

THERE is a disadvantage in speaking a long time in advance of anything that is to take place in a story, for it gives the impression of already having happened. So, as we have spoken of what old Lady Margaret Willoughby became in her last years, how irascible and difficult to care for, also how her estate was disposed of, or something of the kind about it, it may have led people to think at this time the old lady was no longer in the land of the living. That would, however, be a mistake.

She was still very much alive; though her husband, old Enoch Willoughby, the father of Enoch P. the spiritualist, had quietly passed away several years before—dropped over out of doors as though he had feared to go into the house lest he might disturb somebody.

The old lady remained, large, ruddy-faced, Victoria-Regina-like in appearance, and with energy enough left to visit all her more than a hundred descendants—children, grand-children, and great-grandchildren—before she died. So she looked around to see where they could be

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

found ; and, knowing that John Willoughby and Enoch Willoughby were both in Iowa, she decided to pay them a visit.

Besides John had been appealing to her at various times for assistance, and she had sent him occasional loans—which neither lender nor borrower ever expected should be repaid—out of her interest, of course, as she could not make encroachments upon her capital. It was natural then she should want to see what John was doing with the money.

While she was getting ready in Ohio to come, the first trouble with the John Willoughby children took place out in Iowa. The oldest boy was named Israel. He was proud and handsome, but with all those improvident ideas for which the John Willoughbys were noted. If he ever had any occupation when he was young and ever made any money, he never succeeded in saving any of it ; for, when he married, which event occurred about this time, he had not where to lay either his own or his wife's head, and—as his father John Willoughby had in all about ten or eleven children, he could not well think of taking the new Mrs. Willoughby there to become an addition to the family. The result was they came to Uncle Enoch's, just for a few days, on a kind of wedding visit.

This, however, did not seem to be about to find any fitting termination, and the result was that

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Enoch Willoughby decided to find work for the young man, and Hannah thought they could allow Lizzie, his wife, to turn her hand to some useful purpose about the house and so let them earn their living for awhile, and possibly get a little start until they could find something better to do.

While Lizzie was good to work, she was proud, too, as proud as Lucifer, in fact; and she and her husband, in that respect, were much alike. Now all went well until Israel had worked a few days, when he wanted his pay, which he received and took to town with him. It was a small amount, of course, and one would think the young man would have felt like economizing it; but when he came back he was found to have laid it all out in one of those old-fashioned gold hooks, such as people sometimes wore on the end of a watch-guard in those days, and had bought a ring for his wife with what remained.

Now Enoch felt it behooved him to talk to Israel about such extravagance in his circumstances; but Israel was too proud to endure reproof, and flared up immediately in hot words, and ended by taking the ring and hook out to the wood pile and chopping them to pieces. Then Enoch felt he ought to reprove him for this last act also. Of course this led to some hasty words; Cousin Lizzie was brought into the trouble, and made some remarks about spiritualism. This gave Israel an opportunity, and

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

he and his wife both declared they would not live in contact with so degrading a superstition, and directly flew up the stairs and got their things together, and went back to the John Willoughbys, whence they immediately wrote to old Lady Margaret for help.

This event had not much in it, except that one member of the household, that same little James that we have twice before, maybe three times, spoken of, thought the spirits had been at work again, which they most surely had. He retained for a long time the recollection of Cousin Lizzie flouting up the stairs and slamming the door of her room, followed soon by Israel; he remembered also some hot words cast like brick-bats upstairs and down between his mother and Cousin Lizzie when the young couple emerged from the room again and were about to take their departure; he remembered Enoch's pacifying tone as he calmed matters down, got the young couple to shake hands ere they departed, sent word to John to come over *soon*, and told Israel and Lizzie to come back and make them another visit; and then he remembered the sharp discussion that arose between his father and mother; in which his sympathies were all with his mother, of course.

"The idea of inviting them to come back again," Hannah said. "I'd see them in worse straits than they're in now before I'd ever invite

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

them to pay another visit. The impudent minx!"

Words were easy with Hannah.

"I should think thee'd have more spirit," she cried, "than to let them flout thee to thy very face for thy belief, and not even make a reply."

And all this time tears and occasional sobs, and finally reconciliation; and Hannah in Enoch's arms; and then pretty soon the visit of Uncle John, and all peace and harmony again; and soon after that grandmother; and then, after that, more scenes of an interesting domestic character.

In fact, any one can see that this little James was a Willoughby upon whom all these things must have had a great effect.

And when old Lady Margaret did come, the family resumed for a time its former Quaker attitude; went to the Quaker meeting regularly; Hannah's Quaker bonnet saw the light of day now very often; and dreams and visions and spiritual meetings were relegated to the limbo from which they were perhaps derived. Many a good dinner was cooked and set out for the Friends who came to visit the old lady, and a whole flood of respectability came back with her and enveloped all the ramifications of the very numerous family.

If Enoch said anything about spiritualism to her, her principal argument was "Tut, tut," and

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

that succeeded in silencing him better than any of the preachers who had argued with him did. She kept the children about the house from whistling and singing; prevented them from learning music, which they had some inclination to begin; checked and reproved Lyddie for teaching James the Quaker schottische; and, if she had only stayed long enough, might even have influenced William Price to think that the Willoughbys were sufficiently good Quakers to be connected with his family.

But all things draw to a close, and so did finally the old lady's visit.

Peace to her ashes! Right in that visit, while she was the centre of all the attentions of the meeting, the most distinguished visitor from the old Ohio yearly meeting they had had for many a day, she found several wells by water-witching, and nobody thought anything of it. She said the willow twig, when it moved in her hands, felt as though it had life in it. But all this was only queerness, and did not detract from her high respectability and commanding position. She was a rare old lady; and if only she could have outlived her son, instead of him her, he might never have become a martyr for a cause that was developing perhaps from hereditary queerness only. Peace to old Lady Margaret's ashes!

Little James Willoughby was all this time growing older and getting ready later on to take

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

his part in our story. He certainly had a singular childhood, made up of strange notions ; of dreams and visions, and religious arguments ; a childhood of mysterious passions, of strong love and bitter hates and constant checkings for both. With a nature like his mother's, he was quick with passion, and ready to flame at a moment's notice ; but the thought of his father's calm reasoning was always there to check him.

One moment he would feel that he must hate the Quaker meeting and the Sunday-school and everybody connected with them ; then he would hear his father talking about charity and friendliness, and old Shubal Swain, who always remained the best of friends, would come in, and he would feel that he *must* like the meeting and the Quakers, and hate the spirits ; and then he would fill Shubal's horses' feed-boxes with an extra amount of oats and pet the horses' noses out of pure reconciliation with the church and God and heaven.

A thousand such recollections afterward remained in his mind from this strange childhood.

But then would come the hatred of the Quakers again ; perhaps his father would come home from meeting, humiliated and despondent, and the little hands would be clinched and ready to fight against the Church and against God and Heaven and everything.

Out of his recollections of this childhood, how-

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

ever, nothing was stronger than his love for that strange and mysterious father. What was it about him that so fascinated the boy, and gave him that deep love and profound respect which for years hid his faults and made him his ideal man?

He could, years afterward, hear the old horses drive up before the house in Hesper, where he boarded, and went to school in winter; he could hear his father's voice, as he called to them and stopped them; he could see himself rushing out to meet his father; he could recall a little shame as he noticed something about the horse or sleigh or his father's dress that was more rustic perhaps than even that rustic village of Hesper, and then the rush of shame at such a thought; did not his father come for him every Friday night and take him back every Monday morning, and was there not an account always open at William Price's store, where he could get during the week anything he wanted? No boy ever had a better father.

Then he remembered how, one evening, in that good Quaker family where he was boarding—Elijah Tabor's, I think it was—he heard them talking about spiritualism. They had forgotten that he was around; nice, good boy, they thought; always reading, or playing on an old melodeon; never any trouble.

Elija remarked, "It is strange that people can be led aside by so singular a superstition."

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

He doubted, he said, "if any were really deceived by it; it was easier to believe that they were all frauds and deceiving others than that any human being, man or woman, could be so led astray."

If they had noticed, they might have seen the little fellow over in the corner look off his book. He was evidently paying attention to the conversation.

Elijah went on: "It is only these long-haired people, wild-eyed, and unbalanced in mind, that take up with such a belief. No *respectable* people would have anything to do with it."

But this was too much for the boy; his chivalry was aroused; the love of father and mother was boiling in his heart; the Hannah O'Mara nature, of ready words and quick emotion, was astir within him.

He sprang to his feet.

"It's a lie, it's a lie!" he cried, and burst out sobbing.

Then he threw down his book, got his hat and coat, and was putting them on when good Sarah Tabor, who had been like a mother or a kind aunt to her little boarder, went to him and said, in her mildest and gentlest voice: "James, thee mustn't take things so to heart; nobody meant *thy* father or mother; nobody thought of *them*."

The boy was now sobbing and hysterical.

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

"Elijah will tell thee himself, he did not mean thy father," she continued, soothingly. Then, seeing he was about to go out, she asked : "Where is thee going, James ? "

"I'm going home," the boy replied. "I won't stay here."

"But thee cannot go home this cold night all that distance," the good woman said. "I cannot allow thee to ; thee is placed in my charge, and thee might get lost and perish in the snow." So with her mild voice and her calm reasoning she pacified him ; took his coat from him, and got him to go off to his room.

When she returned to the sitting-room, they talked about the incident, those dear, good Friends ; they said, how careful one must be of what enters into the ear of childhood ; they spoke of how easily the little emotions are stirred, and how hard it is to calm them ; and of how filial love is, and perhaps should be, stronger than all belief.

For a long time little James was ashamed to look Aunt Sarah in the face ; and for a long time Aunt Sarah gave the boy extra care and unusual kindness ; buttoned his coat for him when he went out, and made him put a cloth around his throat at the least sign of a cold. And yet now from this incident the boy first began to feel that he belonged to a different class of people from those among whom he lived.

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

Then the boy's mind was filled constantly with opposite impressions, and, like a tree blown by opposing blasts, now swayed in one direction, now in another, might at last be expected to stand erect and point only to Heaven in spite of all the winds that blew upon it.

Every boy, I suppose, must have a hero, who, like his first sweetheart, is apt to be a little older than himself, and little James was no exception. This particular hero was "'Gene," in other words, Eugene Beatty, the oldest son of Doc Beatty, a Hicksite, who still attended the orthodox meeting because there were not enough of his own persuasion to form an independent assembly; a man who was not wrapped up in any form of religion, who paid a fair amount of attention to the world, made a good living, travelled about over the country, and thus saw a great many people and improved his judgment. He had none of the prejudice of the members of the meeting against Enoch Willoughby. He was his family physician, and as he thought most likely his vagaries could never amount to anything, he looked upon them as rather harmless, unless he should carry them too far and so possibly go a little daft over them and injure himself; the idea of his injuring any one else never entered his head.

Impressionable children feel these unexpressed opinions about them, one hardly knows

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

how. Little James felt in some way that Dr. Beatty's family were friendly. He had become acquainted with 'Gene in school, and had once gone home with him. There he had fallen in love immediately with the whole family; with 'Gene and his brother and his adopted sister; with the doctor and his good, motherly wife; with the organ, the violin, and the dulcimer and numerous other musical instruments they all played on more or less; with the old tiger cat and friendly Newfoundland dog, that formed regular inmates of the household; even the doctor's horse and buggy had come in for a share of his admiration. It is not too much to say that the very odor of drugs one always detected there formed the pleasantest fragrance that ever entered his youthful nostrils.

It was not long before he was a most faithful follower of 'Gene. Follower? Nay, admirer, lover! And 'Gene, who was not averse to admiration, allowed and accepted all this homage; but himself preferred to spend his admiration on a man, on some one who was old enough to have horses and a sleigh; who had been away from Hesper and seen the world; in a word, on William Olney Price, who had once been near enough his own age to be 'Gene's companion in an occasional tramp in the woods, but who, since he had come back from Providence, had outgrown his old acquaintance.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

Now, when William Olney Price saw little James with 'Gene, he remembered the boy's friendship for Lyddie. Ever since that last visit Lyddie had resolutely refused to see William Olney, and the poor fellow had all this time been in a bad state indeed. When, now, he saw this boy from the Willoughbys, it was a connecting link with Lyddie's surroundings.

He asked him how the folks at home were, and the boy said, simply, "They are well."

He then asked if his grandmother was still there, and the boy seemed to think that "No" was all the reply that question required.

Then William Olney asked him when she had gone, and where she had gone, with many other questions about her, until one would have thought that William Olney was greatly interested in old Margaret Willoughby. He asked if James's father had had the asthma lately, and whether his uncles, Mose and Eck, had returned from Prairie du Chien or La Crosse—which place was it they had gone to? Couldn't the boy tell him anything about Lyddie? Didn't he know she was the only one at all he cared to hear about? If he had not felt like taking the boy in his arms and hugging him for ever having been near the dear girl, breathed the same air, and lived in the same house with her, he could have punished him for his obtuseness.

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

'Gene thought William Olney was becoming remarkably friendly again, and was greatly surprised when he asked the boys if they would like to take a sleigh ride after school. They were, of course, glad to go. He took them separately, 'Gene first, who liked the ride; except that he thought it very much too short; and next James. But when William Olney found himself with James, the nearest he could get to conversation about Lyddie was to ask him if his aunt liked to go sleigh-riding. Ridiculous! And to talk of her was all that he had taken him sleigh-riding for.

It was time to go back. The boy's eyes sparkled with enjoyment of the ride, the crisp snow, the sharp air, and the sleigh-bells. William Olney had half a mind to tell him the whole story, his love for Lyddie, and how the spirits had interfered with it. Would he understand? He looked like an intelligent boy; had clear, blue eyes, a face like his father's, but with his mother's hair and skin; that is, with Lyddie's complexion. And noticing these things William Olney had a sudden impulse.

"Boy, I love thy Aunt Lydia."

The conversation thus begun, the boy remembered for years its earnestness, its intensity. William Olney could hardly have found it more difficult to make his first proposal to Lyddie herself. The boy was almost afraid of him, he

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

seemed so much in earnest. He did not know what to reply, and said nothing.

Then William Olney went on. "I love her, I think, as well as any man could, and I thought she cared for me. She said so; but since then I have thought she said that only to keep her words from being too painful. Tell me, does thee think thy aunt cares anything for me; does she ever speak about me?"

He corrected himself hastily.

"No, she would not do that. Has thee ever noticed anything that might lead thee to think she liked me? Was thee at home the last time I came, when Lyddie would not see me? What did she do? Where was she all the time?"

He spoke rapidly, question after question, without waiting or expecting any answer. When the boy finally succeeded in saying in reply to the last, "She sat upstairs and cried," he went on:

"She cried? Did thee say she sat upstairs and cried? They are the best words I think I ever heard. Not that I would like to have her cry; but I am so glad she cried. Did she cry long; I hope it wasn't—long, that is I hope she cried long and hard."

The boy remembered for years how the man looked.

"No, no, thee can't understand," William Olney said, finally; "let us drive on home."

PEACE TO LADY MARGARET'S ASHES

He let out the swift horses, and they fairly flew over the hard packed snow on their return.

After this little James found he had such a friend as never before. He had sleigh-rides and books, and skates, until the boys were envious of him.

It almost broke up the friendship between him and 'Gene, and would have done so perhaps if 'Gene had not thought it best to keep on the good side of one who could be so liked by William Olney Price.

And all these attentions were faithfully narrated to Lyddie, and all these presents carried home and shown her; everything William Olney said to the boy was faithfully repeated to her, and everything she said was as carefully repeated to William Olney; but not a note or a direct message passed between them.

XIV

ENOCH TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

THE next happening was certainly unusual and came about in this way. It was a little like the pig that went to market and would not cross the stile. Reason about it or think about it as he would, William Olney, every time, came against spiritualism as the cause of all the trouble. Lyddie was not a girl to be influenced solely by her own wishes; she felt she was doing right, and the fact that her inclinations were against her decision would rather strengthen it than otherwise. She had thought the matter over with many tears, and she had come to the conclusion that she must take her stand. She had, therefore, quietly, but firmly, refused to see William Olney again, and all Hannah's persuasions or William Olney's messages had been of no avail. When he had come to see her, she had remained out of the room, crying it is true, as we have seen, but that made no difference. She could not be moved, or rather the only effective persuasion would have to come from William Price. But William Price was equally immovable. The only possible thing that could influ-

ENOCK TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

ence him would be for Enoch Willoughby to renounce his spirits and acknowledge only the Holy Spirit ; in other words, to become a Quaker and remain one with all his family. So it was a case of "Fire burn stick ; stick beat pig."

The moving motive in the chain of cause and effect must be William Olney himself ; but he could have no effect on his father, and could not reach Lyddie in any way to influence her.

There remained nothing for him to do but to influence Enoch in some way to take his part. Were these two beliefs so irreconcilable? Wasn't it largely imagination on the part of each of them that made the difference? If his father and Enoch Willoughby could again come together and compare notes on their faiths, perhaps some reconciliation might be possible. He did not know, or else he did not stop to consider, how frequently and long they had compared notes on the investigation committee, and only strengthened each other in obstinacy. Since that investigation had begun, Enoch had studied the Bible more persistently, had had more dreams, and had magnified more little and unimportant things into religious significance than ever before, and had been given a great lift upon the very road he was travelling. At the same time William Price and those who had entered with him into the matter, had strengthened themselves in their own opposition, and what they

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

had considered before as mere peculiarities in Enoch Willoughby, they now considered to have been sure indications of his downward progress toward heresy. It was vain to bring these two together. They had better have been kept apart, but to bring them together was the only thing it seemed possible under the circumstances for William Olney to do, and he must do something.

He therefore visited Enoch Willoughby and asked him plainly: "Does thee think, Enoch, that the difference between thyself and my father is irreconcilable? Might it not be healed? Is it not a little thing? Could you not come together and so not bring about this separation that I feel is going to be very hard for some of us to bear?"

And Enoch replied: "It is no small matter that thee suggests, William Olney; we have tried to come together, but have only succeeded thus far in getting farther apart. However," he continued, "if thee wishes, I will again see thy father and once more go over the grounds of our reasoning."

And this last hope William Olney now nourished and made much of; but he might as well have hoped that the north wind and the south wind should blow together, or each blow both hot and cold.

Hannah, too, said that Enoch would have his

ENOCH TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

visit for nothing. He had better let William Price alone and stay away from him. The only thing was, as she had said, to make up his mind that he *was* a Quaker or *wasn't*; to stay with them or leave them. He ought to have some mind or other of his own; pretty soon he'd be like the bats and be neither bird nor beast. He ought to make up his mind what he was going to do before he went, and then he would know whether to go or not. If he was going to stick to spiritualism, he might just as well stay away; he would only excite hard feelings by going. William Price would call it sorcery, and witchcraft, and demonology, and necromancy, and talk of the Witch of Endor, and Elymas the Sorcerer, and only make them both more bitter. Let him stay away. Let William Olney persuade Lyddie of his own accord, in his own way. It was a pity if he couldn't find some way to influence the girl. If *she* were a young man with all William Olney's advantages, she thought she could find some means of influencing a girl like Lyddie. And if she went on and persisted in her obstinacy, let her take the consequences, marry Aaron Melwin, as she most likely would, and live the wife of a drunkard; for it was said the young man already did drink and would most likely go right on to his own destruction.

But Enoch had fallen into the habit of paying little attention to what Hannah said; she

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

said too much, and was too ready with her tongue. So then he decided to make a friendly visit to William Price's and talk over matters and see what conclusions they could come to.

Hannah had to have one last word before he went.

"Enoch," she put in, as he went away, "if I were a man, I shouldn't go near William Price; I would believe what I pleased, and keep it to myself. Thee knows thyself, Loisa Painter told thee, thee doesn't know anything about what is the matter with thee; whether thee has spirits, religion or what; and so thee's got to make up thy mind about it some time or other and then follow thy own mind and be what thee wants to be and let other people alone. Thee'll cut a sorry figure going to William Price's. He'll think thee mercenary and that it's self-interest; he'll give thee no credit for thy corn-crib vision, thee may be sure, and if thee'd take my advice, thee'd stay at home and attend to thy own concerns. I think anyway that Lyddie is the one to give up if any one does. She's the one to be most benefited by it and most injured by it if she doesn't give up. She's young and ought not to be so set in her ways. Let her go over to the Quakers body and spirit and become one of them. It wouldn't do her any great harm; and, if she doesn't want to do that, why, let her stick to her own views and carry William Olney

ENOCH TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

along with her. His father will soon yield to the inevitable, and if he doesn't at first, he will later on. If they ever have children, the innocence in the eyes of a grandchild is more powerful than any religious belief; and, if they are never reconciled in life, why then they may be reconciled hereafter in Heaven, who knows; and if that never happens, there is room enough in this universe for two souls to walk apart always. If I were thee, I should stay at home and let the matter take its own course."

"Oh, Hannah, Hannah," Enoch said as he kissed her and went on his way, "I fear thee has not a particle of religion of thy own, not a particle."

But he turned and came back to her after he had gone some distance, to say another word and so deaden the harshness of his last expression.

"Think how beautiful, Hannah, if this difference might be put aside, and thy sister, Lyddie, be united to the man of her choice, and we could return to the meeting in peace and harmony with all. I am hopeful that it may still be so, and I go in all humility and submission of spirit, trusting that something good and only good may come of our conversation."

Then he turned and this time succeeded in getting away. But he went slowly and thoughtfully.

"I am doing this of myself," he said, "and

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

it is not of the spirit ; I am therefore liable to be in the wrong, and it behooves me to be careful. Will it be given to me what to say ? ”

He felt instinctively that it would not. This matter he should have to do of himself, and singularly enough there was no one in the world whom he distrusted more than himself, and yet there was not one who was likely to do more nearly the right thing. When Enoch Willoughby followed his own judgment, uninfluenced by the opposition or zeal of others, or by spirits or dreams or visions, he was as sure to do right as any one can be ; but the man all his life thought the exact opposite was true. Even now he would have given the world for some slight manifestation. If he could but hear a voice or see a sign, or feel some intuitive guidance, he would have gone boldly on his mission, and, be sure, he would have made a botch of it. But there was not a sign, not a voice, not a vision. Evidently the spirits meant him to work out this matter himself. Perhaps on great occasions like this they distrusted themselves a little, and remained away.

And so Enoch Willoughby came to Hesper, pondering what he should say to William Price. What he longed to do was to enter into an argument with him, in which he should bring up all the passages in the Bible that were relevant, fairly flooding William Price and overwhelming

ENOCK TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

him, to prove the spirit life and spirit communication. He would have liked to prove that he himself was a direct, lineal descendant in the spiritual line from George Fox and the Penn Quakers, and still walking in all respects in their original ways. But he felt that he must forego this pleasure. "Argument is not persuasive," he said, and now his business was to persuade. To do this he must stand on a high plane of disinterestedness and friendliness, and yet he had no idea of retracting a particle. He must not allow himself to be aroused or excited in the least.

"If I could only catch the lofty spirit of Paul," he said. The man only half lived in this life; the other half was in the lives of the apostles, whom he revered; and of Jesus, whom he worshipped." And yet, no doubt, when he said if he could only catch the spirit of Paul, he meant if the spirit would come on him and influence him in some bodily or physical way. His imagination represented all these persons and influences to him in a tangible, visible form.

When he came to the village, he felt more and more his dependence on himself, and his inability to do the right thing in the situation. He thought he would not go directly to William Price's, he would go and see if James was at home at Elijah Tabor's. He met the boy com-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

ing out to go to school, and probably the nearest approach he had to a spiritual impression on this occasion was the thought of taking the boy with him; the boy was only afraid he should be late for school, and hoped his father would not stay long.

Inside William Price's house, the family were gathered in the sitting-room after breakfast, and were about to go apart for the day when Enoch Willoughby was announced.

"He has come to speak to thee, father, at my request," William Olney explained; and at this Sally and Rachel Price arose and went out and William Olney followed them. Then Enoch Willoughby and his son came in. They exchanged greetings with William Price and sat down, and there began a conversation, to which the whole of the family soon gathered as listeners. Rachel Price passed through the room once or twice before she finally stopped and openly remained. Sally was unable to resist her curiosity, and William Olney had not been sure from the first but he ought to take a part in the conversation. The scene remained in the boy's mind for many a year. Its intense earnestness was almost painful.

When Enoch began to speak, he rose.

"I have been urged by thy son to take this step, William," he said, "on his representation that thy objection to thy son's marriage with

ENOCH TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

the young woman of his choice, was based solely on difference of belief, of which difference I know myself to be the cause. If this were not the case, I should not have come. If it were difference of station in life, of possessions, of age, or of character, I should not have come; but, since it is as it is, I have thought perhaps by reasoning together, we might still find our differences were not so great as necessarily to bring about this painful separation between the young man and the young woman."

"Enoch Willoughby," William Price said, not attempting any concealment of his interest, or any indirection, "there can be but one outcome to this conversation. I am surprised that my son has suggested it, and still more so that thee has undertaken it."

His words were few and rather calculated by the tone to prevent or check the coming conversation. Enoch Willoughby was not, however, to be checked by a tone of voice, and continued, calmly :

"Let me assure thee first of one thing, William. I think as thee does in this, that it would be more than useless for us to enter into discussion of *religious* belief. It is with considerable regret that I acknowledge this, for nothing is more pleasing to my mind than to search the Scriptures; and, having found, to remember, and remembering, to bring forward, what is

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

contained therein, to confute error, to establish positions, and to——”

“That is the very thing,” William Price interrupted; “thee would warp the Scriptures to thy own use.”

“I will not deny,” Enoch went on, determined to be pacific, “that there is danger of that which thou sayest; but, in this case, it seemed to me best not to enter into such discussion; rather indeed to ask thee, Is it worth while to separate those who could be united in spirit because of so slight a difference in religious belief?”

The man spoke with humility, but yet with a conscious dignity that put him in the right and the other in the wrong. He was concessive and pacific, high in tone; and, backed as he was by a good character, a good family, a long line of respectable antecedents, and with important connections among the Friends, there was something about his attitude that to William Price seemed patronizing or condescending, and angered him. He allowed his feeling to get the better of him.

“Does thee consider the difference so slight, Enoch Willoughby? Thy perception has perhaps become dulled by too familiar association. I can only tell thee what I think, and thee can make the best of it. The belief that thee professes is nothing but a kind of ancestor worship; thee would set up a totem pole of an

ENOCH TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

Alaskan Indian in the place of the crucified Saviour. That which to the right-minded man causes a shock of ghostly disgust, by close association thee has learned to appreciate, to exalt and to reverence. Thee is on the high road to ruin ; I can but say to thee, I think thee deceived, perhaps purposely allowed to be chosen by the Most High as an instrument for the deception of the unwary, and it is only worse than useless that we should discuss the matter again."

He spoke as though he had finished, done, settled the whole matter, now and forever. He spoke, too, with so much feeling that he was no doubt unconscious of the sting contained in his words, how sharp and severe and cutting they were.

Enoch continued calm and gentle.

"Thee has touched there," he began again, quietly, "upon a subject of great soreness with me, and thee may be right ; yet for my sake and for the sake of those connected with me, I trust thee is indeed wrong ; and that for his own credit, the Most High may not have given me over to be deceived by the infernal powers to my own undoing. That is a harsh statement thee has made, William Price, concerning the Most High, and one I cannot allow to go unchallenged ; but, for the sake of peace and harmony, if thee would retract that statement, we might go on with the conversation."

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

"There is no use of going on with the conversation," William Price continued in the same tone and with the same severity. "I tell thee plainly I consider thee on the way to become a sorcerer, a worker of iniquity. I will have nothing to do with thee or with thy house or thy people."

"Then my mission is indeed in vain," Enoch Willoughby calmly replied; "except that I should now know how unbending thy attitude is; for otherwise if Lyddie had become a member of thy family, it might have been to her great sorrow." He paused as though about to cease from further efforts, and then: "I cannot refrain from telling thee, however, William, before we part, I consider thy attitude is little better than that of the early Puritans, who persecuted our ancestors, thine and mine, William, those Quakers of Salem, and brought them to torment and painful death for those very peculiarities which thee has been pleased to find fault with in me. The spirit of our fathers is being driven from its resting-place in our body, and it is not surprising if it seek to rest elsewhere."

The speech was not harsh because it was impersonal and it was hardly fair to have answered it as William Price did.

"Yes, even in the swine," he retorted, "that rush down the hillside into the sea and are drowned!"

ENOCK TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

If these severe speeches had touched Enoch Willoughby at all, he did not show it, except perhaps by becoming calmer, more reasonable and possibly a little more intense.

“I do not consider the simile well chosen for the occasion,” he rejoined, “for by their fruits ye shall know them; and, from my youth up, I have lived among the Friends and am one of them, and am willing to rest my case upon their knowledge of me. But if thee will only leave me entirely out of the question—for what I am and what I may be about to become is not altogether yet clear in my own mind—the young woman of whom we speak is not bound to follow me, and judging from what I know of her character and that of her family, I think she would soon become whatever her husband is. And now I feel that my mission is ended; and, though thee has spoken harsh things of me, I trust I have not made thy son’s case worse. As for the other matter I have no fear, and I shall henceforth leave it entirely to be settled by thee and thine.”

Then he turned and, taking little James by the hand, went slowly out of the room.

It was the first time he had ever been told in this blunt, harsh fashion, that he was an instrument in the hands of the devil, a sorcerer, a wizard.

“Truly we are not far removed from the days

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

of old," he said to himself, and a shudder came over him as he thought of the possibilities that might arise from the situation. It is true that people could not openly be burned in these days, but all manner of smaller and perhaps worse persecutions were possible. Then his thoughts entirely changed as in a flash, and a great yearning came over him for the people of his old church, of the meeting at Hesper, of the old Chester meeting-house in Ohio, and of his own family. "They are turning their backs upon the very gift that came to them from heaven," he thought, "and first made them what they are; where is that bruised reed broken by the wind, that quaking and trembling body which they used to have when the spirit came upon them of old, and for which they have their name of Quaker in derision. It is gone, all gone, and only in a few good and great women, or in an occasional solitary and despised member of our body are signs of its existence still to be observed."

As he thought these thoughts, he was walking along in silence, holding his son's hand. The boy intuitively felt the intense thought, the strain, the anxiety, the shame, the jar to the affections, for children are like the upper chords of an instrument that catch the waves of harmony or discord that sweep over the baser strings about them, and store them up; and when they have become men and women, work

ENOCK TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

out of this harmony or discord the strong notes of their own natures. At this moment the boy hated everything, but especially God and the spirits. He hated God because he thought He had taken William Price's part and was helping him, and he hated the spirits because he thought in some way they had gotten his father into trouble. Why didn't they get him out, if they were worth anything? Why, after they beat him in the corn-crib and made him give up and obey them, didn't they take his part instead of getting him into more trouble?

Such thoughts as these were passing through the mind of the boy, while the father, perhaps, hardly supposed the subject of this conversation would be intelligible to him. If he had thought of it, he would not have taken the boy along; and yet he was not so small, this boy; he was old enough to board away from home in the winter and go to school; he was old enough to take his father's part vigorously before a whole roomful of people, and stand up and tell them they "lied," when he thought they were speaking falsely of his parents. The fact of it is the father had not noticed that all these years he had studied spiritualism and argued with the Quakers and taken their preachers around on their itineraries, this boy had grown from babyhood into childhood and then boyhood and that his reason was beginning to develop.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

It came to him then like a voice out of the blue sky, when James said, suddenly :

“Why don’t thee quit the whole thing, father, and be like George Meader; he never talks about spirits or God or Heaven, but just about the store, and who can pay his debts and who can’t; and about the price of cattle and hogs; and how much of everything a dollar will buy. That’s the kind of man I intend to be when I grow up, and I won’t have *anything* to do with *anything*.”

Slowly and heavily Enoch’s thoughts came back to the boy and what he had said.

“That is very well, James; everything hath its time and its season. We will talk that all over when thee comes home again. Now thee’d better go on to school; I’ll be up for thee Friday.”

They shook hands and separated, and the father said to himself, “What has the boy been thinking about, I wonder?”

Inside, at William Price’s, William Olney said to his father, “Thee has rejected Enoch Willoughby’s advances toward a reconciliation, and made everything worse; thee will live to repent this day, father.”

But William Price could not be led into another conversation with his son on the painful subject. He said nothing in answer to any re-

ENOCK TALKS WITH WILLIAM PRICE

marks that were made to him. Even to his daughter Sally, who remarked that the man's bearing had been good and modest, he replied not a word, but soon went away to his day's business.

XV

LYDDIE DECEIVES HERSELF

THERE was something inexpressibly sad about it when Lyddie O'Mara presently became engaged to Aaron Melwin. She could not have loved him. She had shown clearly enough that her affections were with William Olney Price; but, since that day when she had made up her mind what was right to do, she had never seen William Olney.

Why then had she consented to marry another man? If any one can answer the question, he knows more about it than I do. She undoubtedly knew what she was doing, for the poor girl suffered over it for weeks and wept as if she had lost her last friend on earth.

She made no concealment to young Melwin that her affections were not with him.

"I like thee, Aaron Melwin," she answered to his importunity: "I cannot deny that, but that is all. I fear I care for thee as for a child that needs watching." She told him she was afraid he was not going to make the best out of himself, and that was what gave her concern about him.

LYDDIE DECEIVES HERSELF

And this very concern it was that so pleased young Melwin. He felt that he had some one to look out for him, and be interested in him. He was not a deep nature, and perhaps received from Lyddie as much affection as he was capable of appreciating ; at any rate he was willing to take what he could get, and put up such a constant plea that the girl thought she might be going to make him miserable too. It looked a little as though she were only brought into the world for the unhappiness of all about her. She reasoned that it would profit nothing to refuse him, and could not make it worse for William Olney or himself to accept him ; on the contrary, that it would be the best and quickest way of healing the whole difficulty, and repairing the damage she had already done. There is no doubt the girl took some consolation in the thought of her martyrdom, for it was a case of pure self-sacrifice ; on the other hand, she knew she was preparing for herself a wretched life.

Perhaps after all she would not have been led to engage herself to the young man if it had not been that at this time the Willoughbys were about to leave the country. In theory Enoch Willoughby retained no malice or ill-feeling ; and if any arose within him checked it and put it down by main force. But perhaps such feelings are capable of existing notwithstanding, and of influencing the actions. At any rate, not long

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

after that visit to William Price, he sold the place and paid off the Price mortgage.

Hannah told him she knew he did it because he was angry at William Price, but he vigorously denied it.

"Did thee ever know me to be angry, Hannah?" he asked her.

"No," she acknowledged; "I never knew thee to be angry as other people are in the good old-fashioned way, more's the pity, and fly up, and give people a piece of thy honest mind. For my part, I consider that the better way, rather than deceive thyself by thinking thee had no ill-feeling, and go on acting under its influence."

There were a good many things in Enoch's theories that Hannah had come to have "no patience with," and was finding it hard to reconcile with his actions.

Then Enoch said it was the asthma and the cold winters, and Hannah said that was all a pretence; they had asthma as well in the South; the variations in temperature were just as great, and it was only the variations that counted for anything. Again Enoch declared the interest on the borrowed money was one motive; it was a constant expense and did not vary as the income from the land did. Enoch had all along made up his mind to go to the Reserve at Tonganoxie, though Hannah had said there were Quakers there, and it would be no better. Enoch had

LYDDIE DECEIVES HERSELF

insisted he was not going away from the Quakers, and Hannah had said nothing; but she had kept her own opinion about it.

The time for their moving had been actually fixed upon; but Mose and Eck, Lyddie's young brothers, were not going; and Lyddie did not want to leave them. She did not want to leave the country and the neighborhood; perhaps this had had something to do with her engaging herself to young Aaron Melwin.

In this separation from the church, it would be false to the truth and to art, not to show another side of the picture, to mention the Quakers who sympathized with the Enoch Willoughbys; for there were those who did, and for whom they had the warmest feeling. The Prices were somewhat unusual people in the meeting, their position a little higher because of their wealth and their direct connection with the Providence Friends; and, of course, there were no such ties to be broken between them and the Willoughbys as, for instance, between the Swains and them. We have had occasion to mention Shubal Swain. He was only one of a dozen Friends who were bound by the warmest ties to the Willoughbys from their association together in a new settlement and in a new country. The Swains were as much opposed to the new doctrine as the Prices, no doubt, and as most, if not all, of the Friends were; but they had not the same repug-

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

nance to it. The Enoch Willoughbys said they were more spiritual than most of the meeting.

In fact the Willoughbys now began to classify everybody in this way, into the spiritual and the material or worldly; and they noticed that the classification did not run according to wealth. William Price was worldly, there was no doubt about it; and he had wealth. But Elias Koontz was equally well off, and they had great sympathy with him and his family. Shubal Swain was about as important in the Hesper meeting as William Price, but in an altogether different way. He was on the spiritual side of the meeting; not a preacher, but it seemed that when he spoke in ordinary conversation, there was something of the spirit in his voice and in his words; the touch of his hand was more like that of the Willoughbys themselves. There was a genuine friendly feeling between the two families.

Shubal Swain was so silent a man one might almost say he never said anything, though of course that would be an exaggeration. He said very little, and Mary Swain never said anything but what was good of people, and Lou and Cal and Willie all had gentle voices and kindly natures that made them universally well liked. "They are not afraid to be friendly with us, either," Hannah said, and that now became a very common expression with Hannah and Enoch. People were afraid of being unpopular

LYDDIE DECEIVES HERSELF

if they had anything to do with Spiritualists. They would not want "to be *seen* with one of them," they said. This feeling was strong in the whole neighborhood, but it could not affect the Swains. They were as friendly now as ever, and Lou's jolly laugh rang out in the Willoughby house now just the same among these Willoughby Spiritualists as it used to do among the Willoughby Quakers there.

"Lou Swain," Hannah said to her one day when she had come over to see them, "you people are about the only ones who haven't changed at all in your manner toward us since we became Spiritualists, while others act as though they were afraid of their lives here. Does thee know sometimes when they go by and look around as though they thought they would see a ghost sitting upright on the ridge-pole of the house, I feel as if I should like to go out and frighten them." Even in ghostly matters there was a spirit of fun and mischief about Hannah. She could get some pleasantness even out of a reputation for witchcraft.

Then she asked Lou Swain how it was they did not feel afraid of them.

"I don't see any difference in thee," Lou answered. She was on terms of great familiarity with Hannah. "Thee is just the same tall, lean Hannah Willoughby now that thee always was, and thy chicken gravy tastes just the same now

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

that it always did when I come to see thee." She laughed again, a laugh impossible to describe. "Lou Swain has such a good laugh," Hannah used to say.

The same good feeling existed for all the other members of the family. Enoch tried to convert Shubal Swain to spiritualism, and Shubal listened with infinite patience. I think he took it as a sort of lesson in the Scriptures; Enoch's long and frequent quotations from the Bible seemed to please him.

He said nothing, or but little; but what he did say was golden. "Yes, examine all thee pleases," he said, or such oracular maxims as these, all given as answers to questions or thrown in between arguments:

"No, it is foolish to be afraid of the truth."

"Whether popular or unpopular is not a question of importance."

"Yes, charity for all beliefs and all persons is the only right attitude."

"So thee likes the spirit of the Saviour's teachings; I don't see anything else necessary."

' And so on. But he did advise Enoch not to go too much among the Spiritualists, and in that, too, Enoch Willoughby felt there would have been some lack of perfect honesty. "One ought to live and act honestly, according to his belief," he said, and that he attempted to do in every way possible.

XVI

THE NEW SECT

THIS friendship for the Swains and for others of the meeting had its pathetic side, for it would have to be broken off too. There had been numerous Spiritualists coming into the country of late, most of them, it is true, of no very high respectability, and Hannah at first condemned them all and would have nothing to do with them. But Enoch remained consistent with himself and his inexorable logic ; he would not condemn one for all, nor all for one. They occasionally had those evening meetings still, and of course every one in the neighborhood knew the Enoch Willoughbys were Spiritualists.

One evening a man and two women drove up in a light wagon, stopped before the house, and went in. The two women were sisters ; the man was the husband of one of the women ; all three were strangers to the Willoughbys. They stated their business ; they were Spiritualists themselves they said, and had heard that the Willoughbys were also, and they thought perhaps they would be holding a meeting. They were rather odd-looking people, with a “down

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

East" accent. One of the women was called P'lene, possibly a shortening of Pauline, and the other, Susan. The woman P'lene, the elder, had a rather firm look about the mouth, an expression of the eye that was not bad, but unusual in some way, and a rather metallic tone of voice. The woman Susan was at first sight, to say the least, not handsome ; but when you looked at her more closely, her somewhat too-high forehead was, after all, shapely ; her eyes were mild, in fact, almost too mild, and her voice was unusually soft and sweet, even for a woman's. She seemed timid among strangers, and said very little. The man was simply coarse-looking, and that was about the best that could be said of him.

Hannah made no reply to this suggestion as to the spiritual meeting, or merely said she did not know about it, and asked them to be seated. Then a few commonplaces were passed as to where the women lived, and so on, and Enoch Willoughby came in. The same sort of general introduction was entered upon ; Enoch took up with the suggestion of a meeting and asked if any of them were speakers. They were plainly not accustomed to his style of address, for they spoke of "*circles*" and "*séances*," of "*mediums*" and "*mediumship*." It turned out that all three were mediums of the speaking phase, but Susan, the younger of the sisters, was the most

THE NEW SECT

gifted, the spirit generally coming upon her with very great power and often giving remarkable tests of spirit life through her mediumship. All this was related by P'lene, with occasional notes and comments by her husband, while Susan remained silent and timid. Enoch explained that he was a very imperfect speaker himself, the spirit having indeed a powerful hold upon him, but lacking the right kind of guidance in some way, so that he was made to go through quite singular actions not at all pleasant to look at; thus he had been obliged with great reluctance to resist the inclination to speak in the Quaker meeting, and generally found it best to refrain from yielding to the influence at all.

Then the elder of the two women began to explain to him that what he needed was "development."

"You should sit in circles frequently," she said; "in fact, as often as possible; the influence would then come upon you more and more easily, until finally you would be influenced almost imperceptibly. The best speakers pass under influence without mortal eye being able to detect the change, and such a condition can easily be acquired. The 'conditions' must however be kept favorable." This was the first use of that word *conditions* which came later to play a great part in the life of the family.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

In a word, a meeting was arranged for, Enoch entering into it much more willingly than Hannah, who felt the lack of respectability and standing of these people, and was inclined to pay a good deal of attention to such things. This very consideration, on the contrary, made Enoch Willoughby the more eager to consent to their request and sit with them.

"We must not feel ourselves above anybody, Hannah," he said. This was another theory of his with which Hannah said she had no patience, and in which she put no confidence.

"Thee feels thyself above people just as much as any one does, Enoch," she replied, "only they are different people in thy case; and then thee has a way of treating them kindly and condescendingly; but they are not deceived by it. People all hold themselves in certain places with regard to other people; they cannot help it, any more than any other law of nature; and," she continued, "I don't like the looks of these people, and don't care to associate with them."

But she could not avoid this first meeting; it had already been arranged for; and after it was over, Hannah's opinion had changed. She did not have a fancy for P'lene, but she could not help liking Susan. All three of the visitors had risen and spoken under the "influence," the man but briefly, and unpleasantly it must be confessed; P'lene, too, in rather few words,

THE NEW SECT

and as Enoch said, "a little as though she did it herself." But Susan, the moment she rose to her feet, had seemed an entirely different person.

Her eyes had seemed to catch new fire ; her voice had swollen out sweet, clear, vibrating ; her actions and gestures were simple and appropriate ; her words had no philosophical depth, it is true, and were only of the import of these of most mediums : but there was an unmistakable something about her, that showed that the woman was not herself. The moment she began to speak, Enoch looked up, and Hannah too. They never missed a word or act of hers while she remained on the floor. They almost held their breath, and when "*it*" left her and she sat down they both sighed involuntarily from that feeling that you have when some one executes a beautiful piece of music, and a pleasure akin to pain seizes upon you ; a something,—perhaps an undefined longing that you yourself might have been the performer.

If Enoch Willoughby could have spoken like that in the Quaker meeting, how different his life might have been ! There were almost tears in his eyes when she finished. "She is a good woman," he thought : "*she must be a good woman.*"

He fought off the influence from himself ; he could not bear to let the spirit come upon him.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

He felt it beginning in his right shoulder, and his hands were getting a little cold, but he resolutely held his shoulders still and rubbed his hands back into their normal feeling; and pretty soon got up and brought the meeting to an end by beginning a conversation on some commonplace matter, so that not long after the new-comers went away.

That was the first real spiritual meeting the Willoughbys ever had with strangers, but it was not the last; it only furnished the beginning to a long series of such meetings. Both Enoch and Hannah hoped that those people would come again.

Hannah was captivated by Susan's voice. "I cannot tell thee how it went through me," she said to Enoch. "She is a woman of great spiritual gift, it must be."

And so Enoch thought too. He began also to think the woman might be the means of aiding him in his own development. It may be he even yet had visions of going back to the Quaker meeting, and rising without any twitching and nervous actions, any peculiarity of manner, and yet under the "power" and speaking to his old meeting in such a way as to show them that his "influence" was good.

Hannah as usual had her own opinion.

"Thee is the most envious mortal that ever lived," she averred, "and the most ambitious;

THE NEW SECT

and yet keeps it all down, and conceals it, and deceives thyself, so that thee never knows what thy own motives really are."

And his answer was something like: "Fie, fie, Hannah; what does thee mean by saying such a thing?"

"I mean," Hannah would explain tempestuously, "thee'd give thy right arm to be able to speak like this woman in meeting, and I consider that just as much vanity as all the other little vanities thee's constantly talking about. But thee need not think of ever going back to the old meeting, Enoch. If thee goes in with those people, and learns to speak with the tongues of angels, and with the unction of Stephen himself the Quakers will never listen to thee. It isn't worth while for thee to go to that school to learn, if thee cares for thy old congregation."

But Enoch did go to that school, and later on, Hannah, too.

The next time those people came, Enoch allowed himself to be influenced, and he thought the influence was better. It was a little easier, and certainly he spoke more fluently and with less of that unpleasant manner. And Hannah's liking for Susan grew; she did not so greatly dislike P'lene either; and the man himself became after awhile at least a little more tolerable to all of them. But he finally

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

separated from his wife, and left the neighborhood.

Before very long, a few other families came in, and a kind of spiritual settlement was formed; spiritual meetings every Sunday became common; they were held now at Susan's, now at P'lene's, and at last at the Willoughbys'.

Hannah found that she was easily influenced, much more easily than Enoch—although Enoch always said she did it herself; and Hannah always said he was only envious of her—and she got to liking the meetings; until, finally, almost before they knew it, they had all gone, one might almost say rashly and rapidly, over to modern spiritualism; all except Lyddie.

She had either taken a dislike to it or had been afraid of it; for, from whatever other reason it might have been, she had no more signs of the influence; and, though she met these new Spiritualists, she would not be present at the meetings or have anything to do with their spiritualism.

Nor can we allow that Enoch Willoughby was entirely carried away with them, either. For a time he undoubtedly was captured by the charm of Susan's voice, by the fact of her mysterious double nature, the presence of the unknown and possibly unknowable in her, and in others of the new sect. But after awhile the hard, practical, Willoughby common-sense returned;

THE NEW SECT

Enoch began to notice carefully what was said, and he found it largely unsatisfactory. He considered carefully the tests they gave, and he found they always had some loophole of escape. The women were not frauds—he was convinced of that—but, under the “influence,” they would undoubtedly tell most extravagant falsehoods, directly in connection with their very best tests and proofs; all except this woman, Susan. *She* said very little that was in the nature of tests; but what little she did say seemed to be almost incontrovertible. Her “influence” was an intelligence apart from her own knowledge, and, almost without exception, told the truth. Hers was not a lying spirit; but, good as it was, simple and true as it seemed, a mind like Enoch Willoughby’s could not be content to listen to a woman, if she had the charm of spiritual mystery upon her never so strongly, or repeated over and over the words, “I come from the spirit land to show you there is a life after death,” indefinitely; and that is practically what she did, though with a thousand variations, it is true; in a deep, rich, thrilling voice: sometimes in rhyme; oftener in pleasant cadences and good inflections; with a wide range of melody and harmony of sound. But, after all, it was like a love-song in the opera; you began to want to hear into the words; you wanted more depth of meaning, and less musical effect.

ENOCB WILLOUGHBY

There might be condensed into the mouth of this one Susan and into the effect of her preaching the result of the whole spiritual investigation of Enoch Willoughby's life. It never satisfied him; but he became, and lived and died, a Spiritualist. He had taken the name when he was a Quaker, under the force of his own mental or spiritual growth, and under most painful mental stress, and he purposed abiding by it. He gradually came to lose a little of the reverential feeling he had had for the subject; it became a little like a toy, an old planchette board, with which he once spent a few idle moments, and yet looked upon with a little mystery, as though he still had the feeling that something might come out of it after all; as though, he thought, with a smile half pathetic, "it came very nearly amounting to something anyway." He did not mind it so much now if the spirit did ridiculous things. He could laugh at some of P'lene's grotesque attitudes, when under the influence; and, when he heard wonderful tests spoken of, he would generally add humorously, "Yes, but that was in Indiana, while we are in Iowa; that was a long way off"; meaning that most likely there was no truth in it. Yet he had the same belief in his dreams and visions that he had formerly had. He would have been as much impressed by Loisa Painter's influence now as ever. He studied the Bible more, if possible,

THE NEW SECT

than before. He went to the spiritual meetings, unsatisfactory as they almost always were, because he thought he could not do any better. He did not succeed with his "influence" there much better than he had done in the Quaker meetings. His gestures were unpleasant, his attitudes grotesque, and his imitations and tests, most generally, ridiculous. But he had cast in his lot with the Spiritualists, and he would not leave them. The fact that people said harsh things about them, called them all frauds and deceivers and low people, aroused his sense of justice. He would not condemn one for all or all for a few : and there were, he felt, people of deep spirituality among them ; Christian Dorotheas even, among spiritual mediums.

"Doesn't new wine have to be put into new wine-skins, lest if new wine be put into old wine-skins, they will burst and the wine be spilled," he used to quote in this connection.

But he gradually lost something of his great expectations. After a few months, may be years, of association with mediums and preachers and even spiritually minded Quakers, he no longer expected so much to see suddenly a halo of mystical light appear about the head of Susan when she was speaking ; or a mysterious hand materialize in front of P'lene's face ; or that he could by spirit impression tell accurately the name of some stranger's uncle, or aunt, or

ENOCB WILLOUGHBY

grandmother, and exactly on what day he or she died, and what dress was worn on that occasion. But he and Hannah came to like these people and others of the sect, even if they could not give mathematical demonstration of the existence of God, and of the soul after death. Susan was a good woman, as he had thought; and P'lene, too, though a little harsh in her nature; and they sometimes had very good and satisfactory meetings together with them and with others of the neighborhood. His own actions, when speaking, that had been out of place in some way in the Quaker meeting, were not so noticeable here, in his own home, or at Susan's, or P'lene's, with a group of the neighbors around. If they were remarkably bad, the explanation of them was always ready at hand; it was simply an odd spirit that had taken possession of him. They laughed at its capers, and let it go on its way rejoicing. And the influence did good; that Enoch Willoughby could not have been made to deny. It brought a soothing effect, it harmonized mental trouble, freed the burdened mind oppressed with the weariness of life, just the same in the spiritual meeting as it had before in the Quaker meetings. Perhaps it would have done just as well if he had practised elocution, or singing, recited "Clarence's dream;" or "Hamilton yielded to the force of an imperious custom." I don't

THE NEW SECT

know. I only know that he remained a Spiritualist, attended the meetings with Hannah, and got some good out of them, though just what is not so easy to tell.

But the essential attitude of the spiritual mind is that it feels always there is more in Heaven and Earth than may be dreamed of in our philosophy. It does not know what time something may happen; it is a mind open, and receptive to mysterious influences; and unless we greatly mistake, such a mind can be perfectly sane. Enoch Willoughby could tell exactly where two men should put a spike under a log so that a third man at the end should share the weight equally with them; or how long the short end of a whiffle-tree should be, to make two horses share the load equally with a third hitched to the long end; but I do not believe he would have been surprised at all to see William Price walk into his house, forcibly led by the spirit, and put William Olney's and Lyddie's hands together, and say "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

XVII

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

THIS going to the spiritualist meetings gradually took the Willoughbys away from the Quakers, and came to separate them from even those of the church with whom they had ever remained on terms of friendship. That was sad. They could not bear to give up some of them. Hannah said "she would not have Mary Swain get to thinking hard of them for anything in the world."

"There is no danger," Enoch said. "Shubal Swain is a man who does not judge of people by little and insignificant things. He is a man of great charity and broad mind; thee need not fear."

But one day he saw Hannah crying, actually crying, as in the days when they lived at his father's, old Enoch Willoughby's, in Ohio, years ago, and asked her what was the matter.

"I am ashamed to say," she said at first, but then: "the Swains have gone by to the Cadwaladers, and that's the second time they've gone there since we have been to see them. Both Mary and Lou owe me a visit. I can't help

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

feeling bad about it ; of course, they may have had some business at the Cadwalladers' that has taken them there this time, but I feel as if they are going to leave us too. I couldn't bear it."

It was a long time before Enoch could console her.

"Never thee fear, Hannah," he said. "Shubal Swain talks little, but he thinks a great deal, and he seldom says anything but what is just right ; that shows that his thoughts are right ; and, if that is the case, he will not misjudge us ; but thee must be careful thyself."

Then he remembered her intimacy with Susan and P'lene, and told her to think whether she had not herself gone with them more even than two times in succession ; and advised her to consider what Lou and Mary might have the right to think of her, and to be charitable.

Even as he was talking to her, a wagon was heard driving along up the road. Hannah looked out of the window and saw it ; it was the Swains coming back. They had driven in to the Cadwalladers, on an errand probably, and had then come back, and were driving up to the Willoughbys on a visit.

Hannah's spirits were full of exuberant gayety as well as sudden sinkings and fits of despondency. I am not certain that what she did now actually was to her credit, but she was

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

so delighted that the Swains had come that she must do something.

After she had met them and greeted them, she had to go out to bathe her eyes, for every one saw she had been crying, and when she came back, she carried in her hand her old Quaker bonnet. It is impossible to bring back now the spirit of fun and jollity that she succeeded in putting into the conversation that ensued about this Quaker bonnet. Such mirth arises from the moment, only, and cannot be reproduced. They knew she had been crying and their sympathies had been won over; when she now referred to her feelings, and said it was all about this Quaker bonnet, they did not know what she meant.

"I want to tell thee, Mary Swain," she said, "this Quaker bonnet for some time has been on the point of taking a long journey."

They waited for her to continue and explain.

"I have been thinking of sending it back to my sister in Ohio," she said. "If we remained Quakers, I thought I should keep it, as I might need it. If we became spiritualists, I thought I should send it back, as I could no longer make use of it, and my sister might use it."

But here Enoch, rebuking her gently, asked what she meant, and said:

"Hannah, I would not make light of a serious question. Does thee consider that the question

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

of what church we belong to is of no more importance than the disposition of thy bonnet?"

"If it is important, then why don't thee decide it," Hannah replied impetuously. "The more important it is, the more necessary for an early decision. As for me," she continued, "I've been waiting a long time to know what way thee was going to take, whether thee would be a Quaker or a spiritualist; and I am unable to decide; thee's as much on the fence now as ever."

"Hannah has very little mind of her own about such matters," Enoch said, turning to Shubal.

But Hannah would not allow that remark to go unanswered. "It is thee," she said, "who has no mind of thy own. Thee would like to be a Quaker if thee could make the Quakers think exactly as thee does, and be a spiritualist if thee could only prove with miracles and signs and wonders what is impossible to be proven. I don't consider that the whole question is worth any more than the question of a Quaker bonnet; and, as for me, I consider that I have more mind and will of my own exactly because I do not decide. I am waiting for *thee* to decide, and it seems to me it is pretty nearly time. Will thee wait till they turn thee out of the church, wait till we lose all our friends in both directions, while thee is studying something thee

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

can never find out as long as thee lives? That is what's the matter with me. I see we are going to lose all our friends."

Just here Lyddie came into the room, spoke to everybody, and then went on out.

"How poorly thy sister is looking," Mary Swain remarked, and Hannah replied.

"Yes, it is distress of mind that is the matter with her," said Hannah, "as perhaps thee knows, and that is a much more important thing than the final disposition of a Quaker bonnet."

Hannah was full of her theme of the bonnet.

"That's it," she went on; "if the church only affected the religion of our souls, it would not make so much difference; but, when it tells us what kind of clothing we shall wear, who shall be our friends and who not, it is something more serious."

And then she must have had an impulse to confidence, for she said: "I want to ask thee, Shubal, when we go over to the spiritualists entirely, as I feel we are about to do, must we lose all our old friends among the Quakers. Will you people leave us too? Will you think that we are 'workers of iniquity?' We think so much of you ——"

But here Enoch interposed with: "Hannah, Hannah," attempting to cause her to cease speaking, for flattery to the face was as unpleasant to him as caressing or signs of affection.

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

But Hannah was in this as in other things: when she had anything to say, she proposed to say it.

"Enoch, I have the floor," she began, and Enoch was obliged to let her go on. "You are our best friends in this meeting," she continued, turning to the Swains; "you have never shown us the cold shoulder, and I have thought a great deal about it; it is one of the main reasons why I hated to leave the meeting. If I thought you could still respect us and would respect us, I should not so much care; and I want to know what thee thinks about it." She said this addressing Shubal directly. "Never mind what Enoch says," she continued; "thee can tell me what thee thinks; will it be the last of our friendship? Must we give you people up?"

"Hannah," Enoch interposed, "nobody can answer such questions."

But Shubal had been appealed to, and he replied. "What may take place in time, of course, I do not know. People grow apart by gradual dissociation, as they have grown together by association; but, I think I may assure thee of one thing, that as long as we think you are trying to do right, no matter what belief you may profess, we shall never cast you out of our hearts, and we hope you will think the same of us."

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Then all were silent. Hannah wiped her eyes, for, in spite of herself, the tears had been coming, and said she did not so much care in that case what became of the bonnet.

Just then a knock was heard at the door.

It is easy enough in general to make sport of a man in love, but not of one in the condition in which William Olney Price now walked into the room. He cast a gloom over the whole place. Every one felt depressed from the mere sight of him, though, of course, they shook hands and spoke with him, and had him take a seat. They knew he had come to see Lyddie again, and that Lyddie would not see him. He did not ask for her, for he had been there before and had not been able to see her, and she was said, he knew, to be about to marry young Aaron Melwin. But a condemned man has more interest in looking at the place of his execution than any other ; and I suppose some such feeling had been the cause of his coming.

And now there took place one of those events that were not so unusual to that life, but would certainly be very strange in this, for these people did not keep their religion as a Sunday affair, a silk hat to be kept in a bandbox and only taken out once a week to be carefully worn and put away again ; they kept it for every-day use. When Hannah and Enoch fell out, as alas, they sometimes did, it was not unusual at

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

all for them finally to make up by prayer ; as when any domestic trouble occurred in the neighborhood the house committee of Friends used to hold a family service. So now, this afternoon, that meeting in the sitting-room, without having been called for any such purpose, became a religious meeting.

Can one imagine that after-dinner quiet ; the thought of separation of the two lovers that was uppermost in all minds ; the distressed appearance of William Olney, and all the utter impossibility of harmonizing matters. Gradually the room settled into silence. You would almost have expected some one to say, "Let us pray."

But they did not do that in those days ; they waited till a kind of spiritual silence fell upon them as it did now. They were all more or less impressionable. They all felt there was going to be some manifestation of the spirit. What would it be ? Upon whom would the lightning fall ?

Hannah saw that Mary Swain was going to speak. She rose as softly as she could and went out. Pretty soon she came back, bringing Lyddie with her, and sat down again.

The mind of Enoch, all the time, was ripe for the miraculous. Here was a chance for the healer, for the spirit of power, for love, for peace, to return to earth, and conquer the stubbornness of

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

the will. Here was the kind of love-feast that his soul was always longing for.

No one could repeat the words of the good woman who rose and spoke ; and, if they were given, they would not be important. They were mostly words from the Bible, and sung right into the soul.

"There shall be no parting there," she sang, "no sorrowing there, *there* shall be no marrying or giving in marriage, but all shall be like the angels of heaven."

What pangs of jealousy these words had once caused Hannah years ago when she heard Enoch going over them and she thought of him in heaven and not her husband and she not his wife ! It seemed impossible. But now there was something exquisitely peaceful and blessed about the thought of a love that had nothing of earthly marriage in it ; no jealousy, no hateful pang, but only peace and rest ; delightful heavenly rest and mutual confidence and harmony.

The speech of this sweet Quaker woman was like a service in church, every note of which sends the fancy wandering off, searching its past, anticipating its future ; now through our childhood, our present sorrows, our future joys ; leaving us at last with our friends, our lovers, in a world to come. That must be the meaning of religion, that where troubles are irresolvable here they are loosed in heaven. It is the time,

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

the place, the voice, the impression of sincerity carried with it that go to the soul like the smile of heavenly peace and have their effect in a sermon like this. Mary Swain did not often speak in meeting, but when she did it was with great power of the spirit.

And long before she had ceased speaking, there was not a dry eye in the room. William Olney had gone over to Lyddie's side and had taken her unresisting hand and was standing by her. She was crying silently. When the speaker ceased her good words, the room was silent for a time, but all felt then that these two ought to be left alone, they ought to speak together now and perhaps finally, so they went out and left them.

That was a good deal the kind of religious meeting these people were accustomed to ; and what gentleness, what peace came from it ! How they felt drawn together in spite of spiritualism or Quakerism or anything else. They followed the Swains out to their wagon, mostly silent. The thought of those two young people in the house was too sad to express. I don't believe there was anything further said except the good-by's, only as the boy James was lingering about the Swains, hoping something might happen to keep them longer, Shubal said to him, "James, thee had better not get too near old Jerry's hind foot, he *has* been known to

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

kick. I don't think he will, but it's best not to get too close to him."

Within the house were two sad souls. William Olney had gotten down beside Lyddie, and was holding her hand.

"No, Lyddie, I shall have no thought of self-destruction, or of shirking my duty. I am glad that we think alike in this matter. If thee persists in thy resolution and I cannot persuade thee, but must obey thee, then be sure I shall live as best I can, as honestly and uprightly as I may know how. I am not impulsive and impetuous, I fear my soul is sluggish and not easily fired to great or rash deeds, whether of good or evil. I have often wished that I had more of the soul of the poet, that is easily moved to great suffering and great joy, and perhaps to great imaginations of both. But I feel I have not; I am plain and practical. I do not know what my whole future life may be, of course, but I know of the past that I have never loved another woman but thee, and it is not likely that I shall in the future. But I can live even so, and if thee says I must, thee must be obeyed. In one thing, however, I wish thee to hear me, and I beg of thee to accept my counsel and advice. It is hard to speak of it, but I know thee will not impute selfish motive."

And then he urged her not to hasten her marriage, not to do anything rash, to let the

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

young man give proof of his constancy and steadiness.

"Oh, Lydia," he went on passionately, "I could not bear to think of thee a drunkard's wife; and yet, if that is thy duty," he said, "I know thee will not shirk it either." And then he pleaded with her before giving him a final answer to consider it well; to consider whether they were not really betrothed by his confession of affection for her and that kiss; whether she had a right to marry another man, when her soul and his were united in affection.

"What God has joined together," he concluded in words that seemed better than any he could form, "should not be separated in this life; and are we not as much united as though we had stood up in the meeting and made our agreement before the eyes of men?"

Lyddie had recovered from her weeping, which had been the immediate effect of Mary Swain's speaking, and her gentle reason had re-asserted its sway. She freed herself quietly but firmly from William Olney's embrace.

"Mary Swain's words," she said, "are always good; they seem to go right through one and stir one as those of almost no other person; but they must not lead us to forget ourselves. It is very kind of thee to think only of my welfare at this trying moment; it shows the goodness of thy heart, and, far from imputing false

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

motives, I think it best to follow thy advice, so much of it certainly as concerns the avoidance of haste."

And then she reasserted that he was mistaken if he thought merely because of a promise given to the young man, she would not change her mind; that would be to act from mere obstinacy, for a bad promise was always better broken than kept; and if she thought keeping that one were going to make both of them unhappy, she would try to find some way of not keeping it.

"It is not the promise," she said, "it is the cause that led me to make the promise; that alas, still exists."

Then she talked to him in a way that very few other young girls have ever adopted for declining marriage proposals. It was more like a sermon. It was this way of speaking that made young Melwin say, finally, he felt as if he were courting his grandmother. It was a good deal the Loisa Painter style of expression.

"My mind has been dwelling on very peculiar things, William Olney," she began; "I know thee will think it strange, but I have been thinking of thee as though I were thy mother, and loved thee as only a mother can love her son; and, then, that someone came between us and captured thy affection, and that all the pangs of parting came upon me. My fancy carried out the picture and made of me a

RELIGION HELPING LOVE

woman old and solitary, separated from all who ought to love me, and by my fault alone."

Then she "carried out the picture," and such thoughts were too strong for her; she could not resist them. She put herself in his father's place also, and it did not seem to her that William Olney's proposition was a good one; and every time she looked it through, she came to the same conclusion.

Then, as Lyddie tried to free her hand from William Olney's clasp, he said: "Nay; with thy permission, I will still hold thy hand."

He held it, too, as he went on and said: "Does thee remember how, when I first knew thee, thee wanted to make sport of me for my lack of scriptural knowledge? Since then I have sought to repair that lack, and have learned that the Bible says, 'the wife shall leave father and mother and cleave to her husband;' and as for separation in families, Christ says himself that he is the cause of such, for he says, 'Think not that I am come to bring peace; I come not to bring peace, but the sword;' and then continues, saying how religion shall bring separation among all members of the family.

"Lydia," William Olney's last words were, "we love each other, and there is nothing on earth or in heaven that can separate us. We belong to each other, and thee will be doing

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

wrong, very wrong, if thee carries out what thee is contemplating."

But the most he could get from Lyddie was assent not to hasten. She would think over the matter ; she would wait for an impression ; she would listen to the inward voice of the spirit ; and, if anything better was given her to do, she would let him know ; but he must not see her, he must not try to influence her.

XVIII

WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND

THIS love-story, whose foundation, difficulty, and solution all depended upon Enoch Willoughby, his dreams and visions and so on, in order to turn out well ought perhaps to have had some startling catastrophe to decide its course. It might have come about, for instance, that the spirit some night should rouse up old William Price and compel him to leave his bed of feathers—or maybe it was only a hair mattress—hunt up his son, and make manifest his repentance, and so bring the young people together and let all end happily.

Or it might have come about that William Price should persevere in his obstinacy, which would have been more natural; and, when he found that William Olney had been visiting the girl again, and that the Willoughbys were very slow about removing to another neighborhood, that he should be afraid the girl would at last marry the young man without regard to his parents' wishes—which would have been nothing very strange—and so should cast about for

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

some other means of getting rid of his troublesome neighbors.

In that case, of course, he might have run across old Abijah Willetts, who lived down on Nine Mile Creek, below the John Willoughbys', and was really one of the most bigoted old time-serving hypocrites that ever lived, and have given him some indirect hint in such a way that no one could at all accuse him of it, to give Ted Blood a little more direct and intelligible hint; and so, by passing the matter on down among those who lived in that region, finally have brought it to the very man whom Enoch Willoughby had angered that time by giving him some plain advice under spiritual impression, the very man, naturally, from whom Enoch had received that anonymous, threatening communication. In this way, William Price might, indirectly, and from afar off, as it were, have been the cause of arousing against the Willoughbys a very low and coarse lot of people, and so finally have brought about the catastrophe. That would not have been improbable. For religious feeling can be the worst feeling there is, just as it is the best. All emotions may be gauged by their opposites. What is more touching than filial love, and what more awful than a son's or father's curse? Even in this day and age of our story there was plenty of religious feeling. You could find people

WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND

enough advocating church union and charity as long as it was a question between the old established denominations; but mention spiritualism to them, and it was a red rag flaunted in the eye of the maddest bull of Spain. Their charity was all gone in a minute. They lost reason and control of themselves. They felt a good deal as Rachel Price did when she learned that her son, William Olney, was in love with a spiritual medium and threw up her hands in holy horror.

The words of old William Price, when he was talking to his son and to Enoch Willoughby, were nothing but natural. There are many people who would feel the same way, would have great sympathy with him in those words.

It was the rarest kind of nature that could talk like old Shubal Swain when he spoke to William Price about the matter. I do not know what the occasion was—the occasion does not matter,—but this is the substance of the words that were forced out of Shubal Swain when speaking with William Price.

“Why, thee talks,” he said, “as if to read the Bible were wrong; is thee afraid to trust thy Bible in the hands of any one to read? I have more confidence in it. Let Enoch Willoughby read it and re-read it. The truth it contains cannot be crushed. Has thee no charity for a spiritualist? Did not God create him too? If their belief is false, can it stand in the world be-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

fore truth? If there is nothing in planchette boards and dark cabinets and strange mysteries, does thee believe the world is going to be deceived by them for long? I have too much confidence in the good sense of the world and in its final outcome. Does thee believe that all our Quaker speakers are held by the spirit of Christ? I fear, alas, that even some of *them* have seen the spirit only as through a glass darkly. Does thee think it impossible that Christ should ever err? Might not his human imagination have overrated the powers that were with him, and may not he too have attributed to God in him what the immutable laws of nature would never allow? It is better to consider the frailty of all human nature and be charitable. Enoch Willoughby believes he was visited by the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. I do not believe it. I think it was his imagination. Jesus believed that the Devil took him up into a high mountain. If that was not his imagination, in what form does thee suppose that Satan presented himself to him? We must have charity, and, when religion comes into the world simply to make people hate one another, it might be better if it had never come. Wickedness and fraud must be shunned, but honest belief is always worthy of respect."

As for William Price, he had said his worst, and it was impossible to exceed it. It is perhaps not overstating it at all to say that he

WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND

would have preferred his son should marry a woman of the town rather than a spiritual medium. In his mind mediums were witches ; the Devil was incarnated in them. He shuddered at the very thought of them.

"Why, they are human," Shubal Swain said to him. "We have been at their houses. We have even heard these women they call Susan and P'lene, speak under the influence."

"It's insanity," William Price interrupted ; "they are all crazy or on the high road to insanity. Can a man lose his own mind and retain it at the same time ? Can one be in the possession of another, and at the same time possess himself ? It is useless to talk to me, Shubal Swain. It is useless to try to reconcile me with them. If I have the spirit of a persecutor, I have the spirit of a persecutor."

"Our fathers themselves were burned as witches," Shubal interposed. But William Price would not listen ; he could not hear that side of it. Times had changed for him and men had changed. Authority for him was everything ; the law, tradition, the established and unvarying order of the old was all that had value ; he could not conceive of the new being right, even distantly, or partially. He was a type of mankind, as Enoch Willoughby was a type, as Shubal Swain was an extraordinary and wonderful Christian type.

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Thus it might have been that the man, Abijah Willetts, went on that time with some suggestion dropped from William Price.

Willetts was the kind of man to take such suggestion. He was a type of religious bigotry and hypocrisy such as can hardly be found at the present time in America, except in the backwoods—poor, pitiable specimens of narrow-mindedness. Abijah Willetts was known to have said he would not go across the lane on Sunday to save a man's life. Probably this was exaggeration, but an exaggeration that well indicated the man's character. Sunday observance was something tangible; it touched Abijah on the formal, outward side of things, the side he could appreciate. The mysterious, inner, conscience side, he knew little about.

He heard Enoch Willoughby was a Sabbath-breaker. He himself would have plotted on Sunday to cheat the poorest widow in the neighborhood, but he would have done so only while riding to meeting or sitting on the high benches there or sanctimoniously pursuing his other Sunday observances. Perhaps we paint him blacker than he was, but surely not blacker than his type, surely not too black for what follows.

Abijah Willetts had a good reputation, and yet he had been known—let us whisper it, for the sake of that humanity to which we all belong—to take money from a friend and put it

WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND

in his safe for accommodation, without witnesses of course, and then to forget absolutely that he had ever taken it. It was said that on dark nights he did not like to come home from town alone, and no wonder; that he went armed, and people could not understand it; a man of his character; a man whose blessing at table was the essence of grace; a man who could preach and speak with the very words of healing, do you think that *he* twitched and jerked in his utterances, or was moved by an unbecoming spirit? Never.

William Price believed that the *theory* of spiritualism was wrong; Abijah Willetts thought that the *actions* of spiritualists were bad and ought to be prohibited. It required only such a man as Ted Blood to say "that nest of spiritualists ought to be broken up," and to send that letter to Enoch Willoughby.

Enoch Willoughby said little about the letter. He was not a man to fear anything or anybody, and he simply threw it aside. He had better have taken Hannah's advice, believed what he chose and kept still about it. But he could not do that. If he believed that some sorrowing spirit wanted him to take a message to Ted Blood that might prevent his abusing his wife, he thought he must carry it. If he felt that some spirit nearly related to Abijah Willetts was grieving over his short-sightedness and

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

narrowness of vision, he could not resist the influence exerted upon his sympathy to send Abijah Willetts some such book as Robert Dale Owen's "Footprints in the Debatable Land," or a spiritual journal, which Abijah refused to take from the post-office, and over which he was very greatly offended.

"Does he want every one to imagine that I am a spiritualist?" Abijah said.

He would not touch the horrid sheet. "Don't ever offer it to me again," he told the postmistress in high dudgeon.

And Hannah said to Enoch: "It is very foolish for thee to try to convert people; what is the difference what they believe? If thee has found something good, keep it and enjoy it thyself." But that was not Enoch's idea; the same spirit that made him generous in money matters made him prodigal of ideas. The man did really look upon himself as subject to the will of a higher power, and obliged to obey it.

There was also some other point in here.

The sources of our history are a little inexact. It was a matter of turning a payment for work from Ted Blood to Leonard Ramsdell, the husband of that spiritual medium, Susan. Ramsdell was poor and had done some carpentering for Blood, which Blood never intended to pay. There are people like that who will pay some

WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND

debts and not others, who think certain people ought to be paid, and certain others not; in other words, who pay their creditors by getting angry at them. Blood had worked for Enoch Willoughby, and Enoch had taken Blood's note to Ramsdell, and presented it in part payment of his own debt. There was no way of avoiding the payment, and this was another cause of anger in Blood against Enoch Willoughby.

Exactly the run of these events, I cannot give; but there was another threatening letter sent to Enoch Willoughby, a whitecap letter, with skull and cross-bones at the top, a threat of a whipping for his spiritualism and witchcraft. He was ordered to leave the country at once. The letter, of course, was not signed; but Enoch Willoughby knew without the possibility of mistake, it had come from Ted Blood. He knew that Blood was countenanced by Abijah Willetts, and that probably the threat would not be displeasing to William Price under the circumstances. He pondered the letter deeply, and came to a conclusion quite contrary to all the plans we had made to bring about a striking catastrophe to this story.

He said to himself: "People misjudge because they do not understand. The hatred and harshness and violence of the world come from the fact that men live apart from one another and do not know one another."

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

"Such men as Ted Blood are not capable of understanding anything," Hannah said.

But Enoch would not admit that any man is incapable of understanding human sympathy and cannot be moved by kindness and reason.

"Does thee know what I am going to do, Hannah?" he said. "I am going to see Ted Blood and show him how wicked and foolish he is, and how he misunderstands the simplest things."

Then followed a time with Hannah worse a great deal than when Enoch was about to go to talk with William Price. Here there was danger ahead, real danger; and he ought not to expose himself to it, she said. But from the moment the idea came into the mind of Enoch Willoughby, he had determined to carry it out. He was not like anybody else. He was queer, like all the Willoughbys.

He wished there was some way to show the man his friendliness and his good character.

"I wish there was some good way of having him arrested and thoroughly punished," Hannah said.

And so it came about that he went again to the neighborhood of Nine Mile, and, as good luck would have it, found there the opportunity he had been wanting of converting the man to friendliness. He found Blood's child sick of diphtheria, the man away from home, the family

WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND

much frightened and despondent, not knowing what to do; and he immediately encouraged them to hope that something might be done, went for the doctor, stayed all night, and sat up and helped nurse the child, which in the morning was much better and likely to recover. When Blood went back and found what had been done he was won. The coldest ice can be thawed by the sunshine, and the hardest heart can be softened by love. Here was the father's love for the child, which the preacher's love of humanity usurped and grew in, and when the child became better and Enoch Willoughby went away, Ted Blood would have given anything if he had never written that letter.

He said to himself it had not been signed, and Enoch Willoughby could not know that he had written it; but the thought did not long give him satisfaction. He finally went, voluntarily, to Enoch Willoughby, confessed that he wrote the letter and sent it. He blustered and swore now as roundly and violently as before that he would like to see anybody touch Enoch Willoughby to harm him, and from that time on the very people down Nine Mile who had been most dangerous were the ones who took up most freely the new doctrine. They came most to the house to listen to it, had least offence that it was unorthodox, and were more and more Enoch Willoughby's followers and supporters.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

Thus imagination was cheated of its plot—a sort of White Cap attempt to beat the devil out of Enoch Willoughby with hickory withes. It was very hard to carry through such a plot as that with a man who was absolutely honest, without a particle of deception in his nature, with a strong love for humanity, and universal sympathy. It came to be a constant complaint with Hannah herself that he associated so freely with Nick Reynolds and Sam Cox, and old man Small, and especially with the Bloods and Frames and Bingham's; and made no objection to the children going with the young Bingham's and playing with them.

But he used always to say, "Hannah, if the good will mingle only with the better, where does the opportunity for the improvement of the bad come in?" A question Hannah could only answer by saying, "Well, let somebody else associate with the bad. Why should we do it any more than others?"

People became acquainted with these ideas of his and liked them. They began to praise him. They turned even the John Willoughby family into a subject of praise of Enoch, and told how much he had helped his older brother and how various ones of the children had come upon him for assistance, and how these very children were accustomed to speak slightly of him and of his belief. They saw how foolishly proud they

WILLIAM PRICE'S HAND

were, and how little they had to be proud of, and yet how they could all depend upon Uncle Enoch, and all those things they liked in him. They began to want to know something of what such a man actually did believe, and began to come about more and more. In fact, if Enoch Willoughby at this time had wanted to go back to the Church, he would have found it difficult to do so. He had become known as the advocate of a new doctrine, his reputation was fixing itself; the new wine was going into new wine-flasks, and, instead of a dramatic and strange ending to our story, it has become simply the founding of a new sect, the going over to a new religion.

XIX

TIME AND AFFECTION AGAINST REASON

AND as the spiritualism gradually fixed itself the chances for a happy solution of the love affair became fewer and fewer. Everyone connected with it was perverse and obstinate still. William Price's objections could hardly be expected ever to grow less ; Lyddie's reason would not allow her to yield, though she did see William Olney occasionally, and her sense of humor sometimes got the better of the pathos of the situation.

Once William Olney said to her, with all the gravity of his Quaker style, "Lydia, I can think of nothing now but to take thee boldly by main force and carry thee off, as they used to do in olden times."

And Lyddie replied, with the same humor, "I could almost find it in my heart to wish thee might do even that."

But when they talked about it seriously, Lyddie ran against that inevitable train of reasoning, her conclusions remained the same. There did not seem to be any possibility of a different arrangement.

TIME AND AFFECTION

Meanwhile young Aaron Melwin was becoming tired of waiting. He was saying to himself he felt a good deal as though he were courting his grandmother. In truth, Lyddie was greatly his superior, and were it not for the fact that the most incongruous marriages are constantly being made, no one would ever have thought it possible that Lyddie O'Mara should marry Aaron Melwin. Her motherly character attracted him; he liked having some one to look after him, though, as a result, he did as he pleased much more freely than before. It was an attraction such as young men have sometimes for a woman ten years their senior—tremendous respect, with awe and perhaps affection at first, and at last, restraint.

Lyddie's reproaches and mild sermons to young Melwin, when she heard of his escapades, he considered very delightful. He took them as the natural corrective to the escapades themselves, satisfied his conscience by listening to them, boasted that he had taken his lecture or sermon and was now good again; but, after a while, he failed to put in his appearance to receive them. Lyddie's reproofs were now at times less graciously received, and meanwhile Lyddie herself was slowly arriving at a decision.

Lyddie would never have acknowledged that she engaged herself to Aaron Melwin because she had determined not to marry William Olney;

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

she would have denied, too, that she was about to free herself from him now because she loved William Olney and was beginning to be conquered by the strength of his affection. She was simply conscious that she was losing her influence over young Melwin; and, if she could not hope to better his character by marrying him, it was hardly worth while to take the risk. So she sent word for him to come and see her, and then released him from his engagement.

Hannah told her, when she heard of it, "Of course that was a good thing and sensible. But now I suppose thee is about ready to accept William Olney Price, in spite of the family opposition, and go over to the Quakers."

There was a little touch of bitterness in this; for, since Enoch Willoughby had obtained so strong a following, he had been better and better satisfied to remain away from the Quakers, and had become more and more positively a spiritualist. Lyddie did not reply, but it is true she began to recast her argument, to run through her reasoning again. In fact she had already yielded when William Olney gained time. It was then he really won his case; and when the girl had made up her mind in this way, it would be just as hard to change her as before.

"Lyddie is just like Enoch," said Hannah; "she acts from pure obstinacy and nothing else."

However that may be, there was love in the

TIME AND AFFECTION

case on both sides, and who can blame the girl? William Olney was constant and persistent. We may be sure that he did not magnify the opposition of his family, or make the family separation appear greater than it really was. Lyddie could not avoid contrasting the two possible futures: she thought of Rachel and Sally Price and their elegant home and surroundings; of the good old Quaker meeting and the friends she had there—there was a glamour, a halo of respectability about all this that attracted her unconsciously. On the other hand, there were the spiritualists; there were Susan and P'lene, and three or four others who had come to the country recently. There was no difficulty in seeing what was better from a worldly point of view.

Then again she had felt the same spiritual "influence" at Quaker meetings as at spiritual meetings. When old Uncle Allen used to go under "influence," and she sat in the silence of the Quaker meeting and watched him, she had felt the presence of something mysterious about her; her hands grew cold; an indefinable thrill passed over her; she was almost irresistibly impelled to rise and speak as she had been in the spiritual meetings.

She said to herself, "It is the same thing, the same something, whatever it is, that makes the Quaker women preach, that makes some other women become spiritual mediums."

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

The one was honored ; the other was neglected, and by some probably despised. She knew these were all worldly motives, and she put them resolutely from her ; but they returned as resolutely again. She thought of Loisa Painter, and she thought of Susan Ramsdell ; which would she rather become ? In case the spirit came upon her, what would she rather be, a Quaker preacher or a spiritual medium ?

These are not the usual thoughts of a young girl when she is considering whether to marry the man who loves her or not, but they were the thoughts, worldly thoughts, it is true, that ran through Lyddie O'Mara's mind ; and who can blame her if the balance inclined toward the Quakers ? Suppose, too, William Price should become reconciled ; and such a thing was possible. She knew Rachel Price liked her ; had she not said " she was a good woman ; " and suppose she should become a speaker in the meeting. He would be as proud of her then as he had been harsh to her before. There was a professional pride in this too. Lyddie had the pride of her spiritual experiences. She would have liked to have a whole settlement stop working and wait breathlessly for what she should say or do, or even think, as they did for Loisa Painter. Of course she should never be anything but the instrument of the spirit ; she should only be a bruised reed ; but it would be

TIME AND AFFECTION

very pleasant to be only a broken reed if one were taken up tenderly, put into a delicate vase and cared for in proportion to the amount of the bruise.

Poor Lyddie! She fought down all these thoughts desperately. She said to herself she was vain, she was frivolous, she was worldly-minded. She wished she could be like Enoch, who took always the side of the poor, the unpopular; who would rather be called a spiritualist than a bishop, if only he were confident he was right.

Sometimes in imagination she could see herself and her sister as they became years afterward, with Lyddie married and living calmly in the Price family, the opposition over; the simple business of living, ordinary and unromantic, and Lyddie giving way to the same old nature that was in her and speaking in the Quaker meetings. She would have become a Quaker while the Enoch Willoughbys had gone on in the way they were going, and become spiritualists. Then it would be that Hannah could not find expressions too severe to say of Lyddie: "She knew on which side her bread was buttered; she knew on which side to find respectability and good living, and that was all the girl cared for. Now she was a good Quaker preacher, was she"—and there would be that little sarcastic twang in her voice that she knew so well how

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

to manage—"and looked down on all the rest of them, on her own sister probably, as deceived and led astray by the devil. She had never supposed that Lyddie was a schemer, for it *was* scheming, and Lyddie had used the spiritual gift that had been given her simply to make a living out of."

And then one might hear Enoch's voice.

"Don't thee suppose, Hannah, there is religion in all denominations and outside of all denominations? The girl followed her own inclinations, and that was right. She loved, and she married the man of her choice, and that was right; then the spirit came to her again, now among the Quakers, and she became a Quaker preacher; if it had come to her among us, she would have been a medium as thee is."

"Enoch"—though there would be very little connection between this and what Enoch had been saying—"I think we had better quit this 'theeing' and 'thouing'; we are not Quakers any longer, and what is the use of carrying out the pretence?"

And so they might have dropped the conversation about Lyddie, and incidentally have decided to drop the plain speech also—as they did; a very little thing, but with a good deal of pathos about it. When Hannah first said "you" to Enoch, it was almost as though she had used a profane word; it came with a shock;

TIME AND AFFECTION

it always had to be forced a little, and was always liable to be replaced by the more familiar "thee" whenever one of them was sick or in any way needed a little tenderness; and the children said "thee" long after the father and mother had begun to force themselves to use the more formal style of address.

But one would have thought at other times, to hear Hannah, there could not be anything genuine among the Quakers at all; that their plain clothes and plain speech were just show and pretence, and their "Bible worship," as she called it, and their regularity at meeting and orthodoxy, mere idolatry. Lyddie, on her side, though more careful, had very little use for mediums, and used occasionally to call them fortune tellers, perhaps the harshest expression she ever allowed herself.

The girl was not to blame. She had said to William Olney she was "sure there was something in it; just what it was, she did not know. She thought it best, however, to be on the safe side; she feared she was not worthy to be a martyr. It required some one with visions as vivid as those of Enoch Willoughby to be that.

"But what will thee think of me, William Olney, if I accept thy proposition now after all?"

That was the way she talked to him when he was pushing his suit after he had learned she

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

was free from young Melwin. "Will thee not think that I have been scheming and calculating, and not at all in earnest? Will thee not think me incapable of earnest conviction, and very worldly wise?"

But William Olney was too much under the influence of his passion really to consider what he would think.

"I consider thee only a beautiful girl, Lydia, and one who is about to make me happy forever by consenting to become my wife," he said; "and, as for thy religion, I have always told thee I knew little about that. It does not seem to affect me any. Perhaps I do not understand it; whatever suits thee in that matter will, I am sure, be right."

"But what shall we do," Lyddie continued, "about all these reasonings on separation in families, and how could I ever forgive myself if our marriage should be the cause of such separation?" And then they discussed what they would do to reconcile the father Price. It was certainly a singular love meeting.

In the midst of it William Olney said, "Thinking as thee does, surely, it could not be wrong or against thy principles, if thee would return to the meeting occasionally, before our engagement is heard of; it might make it much easier for my father to become reconciled to our marriage."

TIME AND AFFECTION

It is not to be wondered at that Lyddie consented, and then reproached herself for it when William Olney was gone. But she did manage to go to the Quaker meeting the next Sunday with one of her brothers, and never felt so conscience-smitten in all her life. She said to herself it was all the same thing, and why should one become a martyr for an unpopular cause, and that really no cause after all? Enoch Willoughby unconsciously encouraged her in the thought. He led her to believe that all religion was essentially the same, that at the bottom of it was the belief in immortality, and this belief was strengthened and kept alive by various mental and emotional phenomena; that these varied in power and frequency in different persons and at different times and periods, and when they had lain long dormant belief died out of the world, and religion became ethical and intellectual; from that it passed into the dogmatic and institutional, and then became mere history. Now this in the soul which is known as religion should perhaps be nameless; for as soon as it is named, a sect is formed and theology has begun; yet, if men will live in the world, they cannot avoid the forming of sects any more than they can the use of names, and he had accepted the consequences. He called this something in the soul the influence of spirits, and believed it to be caused by the actual contact with the spiritual world about

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

us. Others called it God, and thought it sure to lead them right; others might with equal justice call it the devil, and say it was sure to lead them wrong; and not a few, he felt sure, had similar experiences which they considered to be only the workings of their own imagination under the influence of the emotion. These were low forms of religion, all of them, Enoch Willoughby asserted, existing in close connection with the emotional nature; and what there was of right or wrong, of permanent or transitory, of truth or falsehood, in them, each individual must find out from his own experience.

Lyddie put great confidence in Enoch Willoughby; his words were to her like law, a real explanation; and they quieted her conscience. She could be just the same religiously, no matter to what church she belonged.

She was most concerned about what interpretation might be put upon her conduct. "Will not thee thyself," she asked William Olney, "some time say that I have acted from false motives? No, do not try to influence me by thy cajolery." He had probably taken hold of her hand at this point in the conversation.

"I am trying to put all that aside," she continued, "and to think just as though I did not love thee. Suppose anything should come up between us; suppose thy father should not become reconciled; and suppose it should lead

TIME AND AFFECTION

thee to great trouble, perhaps even to poverty ; and, in the difficulty of our lives, suppose even our affection for each other should grow less—I am simply imagining what might take place—is there not, then, danger that thee may think I have acted unworthily ; that I have accepted thee, because I hoped thereby to lead an easier life ; and that I did it against my best light and knowledge ? Will thee never say that ? ”

And William Olney replied, “ No, be sure I will never say such a thing as that, Lydia. Thee shall never have cause to repent of thy choice, and I know I shall never repent of mine.” Then they gave themselves up to one another to love and to be loved.

Always they came back to the subject of how everyone should be reconciled. It was so easy to think that all the world would soon be in harmony, when they were in each other’s presence, walking together in the garden, or clasping hands at meeting or parting. If only all the world was in love there would be no trouble about religious matters ; they would all then be very easy to manage.

Lyddie felt, most of all, that her sister would never forgive her ; not that Hannah would have her do otherwise than marry William Olney Price, but she would always think she had done so from motives of expediency, and Hannah would say just what she thought. That would

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

separate them eventually, and would leave Hannah alone, for her younger brothers, Lyddie knew, would go as she did. Hannah's quick words and impetuous nature did not fit her for leadership ; she would be one thing to-day, another to-morrow ; and how can any one follow the quick changes of an emotional fancy ?

Lyddie knew all this and discussed it with William Olney. "Oh, my friend," she said, "thy separation, I foresee, cannot be greater than mine, and whatever comes of it, we must hold together. That must be our reward for the difficulties we shall have to encounter."

And then again and again they talked of how they might win old William Price's affection. Here Lyddie's enthusiasm knew no bounds ; she had confidence in herself ; she did not know how it would be done, but some way, she felt sure, and most of all by keeping the right spirit. "We must, from the first," she said, "care nothing for worldly advantages ; we must not be discouraged if he is never won, but persevere, and disinterestedly and unselfishly act from motives of love."

It was this nice way of talking in Lyddie that Hannah called her religious cant. She said that Lyddie was just the sweetest kind of a hypocrite, always with good words on her tongue ; but what Hannah said must be taken, as we already know, with a little allowance.

XX

THE BETROTHAL

ONE day after Lyddie had consented to the marriage little James again found her in tears. She had told him of the approaching event, and when the boy was expressing his delight she checked him, and then he noticed she was crying.

"It is not all as bright as it looks to be, James," she said, and the boy immediately began to think the spirits probably were making mischief again. "But I trust and hope it will come out right," she said, and then she could not help sobbing.

The boy came and stood by her. There was that kind of affection between them that existed between him and his father; intense, but calm and reflective. When the boy wanted caressing, he went to his mother; when he was angry, his mother was the one to sympathize with him; when he was afraid, his mother was afraid, too; sometimes they told each other ghost stories until they were both afraid to stir from the room. His mother recounted to him her troubles with Enoch and Lyddie and the Quakers, in her own

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

quick, impetuous way. The boy knew, when not more than twelve years old, that his father did not kiss his mother at parting unless she suggested it; that he did not pet her or praise her as she wished, but acted as if his principles were, "When things are well say nothing!" His mother was a child, and did not know better than to make a child her confidant; or, if she knew better, she did not care; or if she cared, she could not resist talking to some one who could appreciate her moods and sympathize with her.

The boy had recounted his experience at Elija Tabor's to his mother, and she had clapped her hands, and cried, "Good, good," and laughed, and petted and hugged him. "Thee'll give it to them, Jimmie," she said; "thee won't be a non-resistant, or preach charity, or talk religious hypocrisy, but go right through the world and fight thy way like a man, knock people right and left; oh, that was good, that was good. Yes, hate thy enemies and love thy friends; do good to them that do good to thee, and as for them that do evil to thee, try thy best to outdo them in it, and then they will respect thee, and fear thee, and know how to take thee and understand thee; the other is all a mere made-up doctrine."

And so later it was with his mother that he was constantly joking, and on her he learned to practice his youthful wit; the sharper it was,

THE BETROTHAL

the more she delighted in it. She could not command from her children the respect that many mothers exact, and would not have allowed it if she had been able to comprehend it. It would have been as foolish to her as to make one child respect and obey another.

But now when the boy came to talk with Lyddie or his father everything was different. Lyddie had taught him dances and games, but there was nothing exuberant about her joyous moods or depressing about her despondent ones. Hannah could sometimes cry by the hour, and had many a time shocked the boy by wishing she was dead. But Lyddie, in joy or tears, was placid and controlled. It was she that gave the boy his greatest insight into nature. She taught him that a rose was beautiful, that the yellow down on a dove in its nest was soft and pretty, and that the parts of a feather were wonderfully conjoined. She taught him to respect his father, without telling him not to obey the instincts and caprices of his mother. She led him to see and appreciate the good points in his father's character.

"Thy father is never angry, James," she said to him, "and that is good; be sure it is good. He has principles and will follow them, and be sure that is right. He is not deceived by outward appearances, and be sure that is a great thing. He sees the beautiful where others see

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

it not. Has thee never seen him bring in a bunch of blackberries hanging in their cluster of green leaves, or a thorn on which a beetle has been impaled by the harsh shrike? James, be like thy father. He sees much farther than other men, away off into the depths of nature, around and through its dark places."

And the boy had immediately thought again of the woods back of Lars Oleson's, and of his father driven about by the spirit with an ox goad. Yes, he had surely seen into dark places enough. His father and Lyddie were just alike. The boy had a strange sort of veneration for each of them.

Lyddie soon regained control of herself. These tears were her parting tribute to this friend of her childhood. It was as though she had the gift of the seer and prophetess and felt soon the boy would be forever separated from her; perhaps she might even become for him an object of dislike. But it would not do to give the boy such anticipation of evil. She took his hand and petted it.

"I hope thee will always think of me as a friend, James," she said.

And just then Hannah came and told her that William Price was down-stairs and had asked to see her.

"William Olney, thee means," Lyddie said, as a slight blush suffused her face.

THE BETROTHAL

"No, not William Olney, but William Price," Hannah replied.

"Impossible," Lyddie thought, but in a moment was calm. That was her nature. Her thoughts grew clear. "I am coming soon," she said. She went before a glass, but nothing needed readjusting in her hair or her toilet.

"Lyddie always looks well," Hannah commented; "she is just like a partridge; its feathers all know their places naturally, and never get out of them. But what can William Price want with her?" she thought.

"It is just like him, though," she said to Lyddie, aloud; "he's heard of thy engagement to William Olney; this is the second time now they've been here on that matter. I should think he'd be ashamed ever to set foot in this house again." Then as Lyddie was about ready to go down-stairs, "I hope thee'll give it to him—he deserves it; don't be afraid, and don't let him get the better of thee; don't think too much of thy engagement. William Olney's dead in love with thee, and will never give thee up, and if he does there are plenty of other young men. Thee can always stay with us too and need not ever think thyself a charge on us. Let him see thee's a woman of spirit. If thee gives in now, he'll rule both of you all his life; and let him understand that on matters of religion the conscience, and not tradition, must be thy guide."

"Oh, Hannah, Hannah, thee is making it very hard for me," Lyddie said, "very hard." And then she broke away from her and went downstairs.

In Lyddie's mind were the words, "For it will be given thee what to say," and surrounding her had come a great wave of spiritual exaltation. Here was a worthy aim for her, a kingdom to be conquered. If she could capture and lay before her husband's feet his father's heart; if she could win his father's affection! Like the speaker when he faces the multitude, like the general before he gives the final order to charge in the battle, she felt herself sink into insignificance before the greatness of her responsibility. She trembled like a reed. A prayer went up in her heart—"O, ye heavenly powers." Long vistas of happy futures flashed before her in which husband and wife, parents and children, and grandchildren, in happy union lived a blessed life on a peaceful earth. "Come, all-conquering love," she was saying; her spirit was just ready to kindle; there was a spiritual power about her eyes, her breast; she was Joan in her prison watching the battle from afar and about to break her chains and rush upon the field. Never before perhaps had a young girl been put in such a situation; never before perhaps had there been such a girl as Lyddie. She had conquered Rachel Price's good will as with a

THE BETROTHAL

wave of her hand. If she had been a spiritual medium, she would have said "The power was about her ;" if she had been a Quaker preacher, she would have said "The Holy Spirit was alive within her."

Perhaps it was her emotion. Perhaps it was God, whose essence is love. Perhaps it was her irresistible girlish simplicity and womanly sweetness; the power in her eyes; her gentle nature, her charm, her youth, the soul and spirituality of her voice, its thrill, as she went up to William Price and spoke to him. Have you ever listened to such women? If Lyddie had been a calculating actress she would not have done a more effective thing than she did now, or looked or spoken more to turn to friendliness a hostile opinion.

"It shall be just as thee says, William Price; it shall never be without thy consent." These were her first words, and then she went on and spoke to him; she did not know what she said, and did not know how she said it.

She always believed afterward it was the divine spirit that came upon her. She was not wholly conscious of what she did or said until, finally, she felt herself weeping, holding William Price's hand, calling him father and he calling her daughter. There are wonders in the world still; miracles of change in the human heart now as ever. At the time there is a halo about them,

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

a mysterious heat that envelops and fuses hearts. Call it mystery, call it divine love, call it God, but do not say it is not, for you will then show to the wise your own ignorance ; and within its range it can perform the apparently impossible.

Would you like to hear Hannah's interpretation of this piece of acting ? " Lyddie," she said, " thee is certainly one of the profoundest little hypocrites that ever lived ; and, if thee doesn't get a fortune, it is certainly not because thee has not worked for it. I congratulate thee on thy success. William Olney may well be proud of his wife. I suppose thee will blossom forth now soon as a Quaker preacher, and be put at the head of the investigating committee that is trying us for heresy. I have heard of people who would say they believed in God, and immediately afterward make some mental reservation, such as ' if there is a God ' ; and thee now will say, I suppose, thee believes in the Holy Spirit, and add under thy breath, ' if there is any.' I wish thee joy of thy conversion of thyself to thy father-in-law."

But nothing that Hannah could say, nothing that anyone could say, was able to trouble Lyddie's sweet peace of mind now. She kissed her sister in spite of her—for Hannah was not inclined just now to be particularly friendly, and had a hundred more things on her tongue to say. But Lyddie wanted to be alone awhile ;

THE BETROTHAL

she wanted a chance to think, to collect herself, to recover from her mental exhaustion ; and Hannah very reluctantly left her, after Lyddie had promised to tell her more some other time.

And so Lyddie had conquered her kingdom ; she believed she had been helped to do it by something higher than herself. Oh, happiness unutterable ! She was not then to be a cause of separation in her husband's family. Rachel Price, whom she had long thought she could love as a mother, would be her friend ; and William Price and all of them. It seemed a heavenly gift ; unexpected, unheard of.

She had been greatly startled when she heard that William Price was again at the house to see her. There had been no intimation of his coming ; William Olney had not said a word to her of the possibility of such a thing. She *had* thought that Rachel Price might now possibly visit her ; but *this !* It was unheard of, impossible ; and yet true.

She reviewed the whole event. She had not been unconscious, though she felt that she had hardly been herself. She had been carried out of and beyond herself ; her own interest had died away. She had been the operator unflinchingly carving his own flesh. It had been a moment of supreme self-sacrifice—true, real, as if there had been no selfish object to gain. From those words, “It shall be just as thee says,” she

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

had given up to William Price completely. She had put herself in his place, and shown him her appreciation of his feeling. She had such sympathy for the broken-spirited father that he had been touched at the representation of himself. And then—no orator could have done it more skilfully—she turned the conversation to his son. She spoke of his steadfastness in affection; his unselfishness when she was about to marry another; his obedience to high reason, to which she had finally yielded as to the highest and best; and then, in a few words, she gave him the thoughts that had been gathering in her mind about her own religion; a few words, but clear. The spiritual world, which is our intimation of immortality and our basis for religion, is not to be worshipped except manifested in a wise and perfect form. She believed that Christ was such manifestation. She could not remember what words she had spoken, but again she had given up her own knowledge of what was right, of what was truth, for William Price's sake. Something had compelled her to be thoroughly and truly self-sacrificing. She was not thinking of conquering, she was thinking only of forcing herself to yield.

When William Price had taken her hand and called her daughter, she had glanced up at his face, and, for the first time in her life, she saw something she liked about it; something Quaker-

THE BETROTHAL

like, staid, and at bottom kind. For the first time, too, she saw a resemblance in him to his son. They had not spoken much. He had kissed her on the forehead and said that Rachel was coming soon to see her, that William Olney had told them of the engagement.

That announcement had been an interesting event, too, but very brief. It was another scene in the library. The son had risen to go and said : “ Father, as I before told thee I should do, I have done everything in my power to persuade Lydia O’Mara to consent to become my wife. She has at last, after long thought, done so. I have accepted thy former attitude as final, and now wish to ask thee what I shall do regarding my connection with thy business affairs ; to whom shall I turn over my former duties ? ” There was not a trace of emotion.

The father looked at the young man, the pride of his whole life ; the copy of himself ; true to his convictions, firm, honest ; when necessary, bold ; he would make no failure of life ; he would begin for himself and go straight forward by himself to the end. This was the beginning of the end.

Some one, something must yield ; father or son, love or hate ; and how can a house that is divided against itself stand ? How can a man love his wife and hate his own father, or a father hate a son’s wife and love his son ? Our souls must be full of love or hate ; we must be of the kingdom of

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

God or of the kingdom of evil. Like a flash all these thoughts passed through the father's heart. Perhaps just then the transformation, the miracle, began. Who knows what may have happened in that same father's life, away back in its beginning; some scene between another father and son whose remembrance has remained like a sting?

Gradually some dark pictures that had been haunting his mind disappeared; some table rappings and materializing cabinets and planchette boards, that had been to him the instruments of the devil, became in his mind but a few useless and unavailing scientific experiments; failures, of course, but not of importance enough to change the sweet stream of a lifetime to gall and bitterness. Gradually there emerged in his mind, from among witches and wizards and frauds, the form of a young, respectable, hard-working, zealous, and spiritually-minded Quaker, whose dreams and visions and spiritual whippings and visitations indicated depth of mind and character, his own opposition to which came to seem trivial, little. Gradually the bacchante or fury, raging at him from a spell of madness, became an emotional Quaker woman of really very good qualities, only excited by a little hysterical passion.

And William Price looked at his son, rose, and took his hand. He did not go further then,

THE BETROTHAL

but the young man saw in his father's eyes a light he had not seen there before.

"To-morrow, William Olney," he said, "to-morrow, come to me at this time again." And William Price, the father, that time left the room first.

That had been the real miracle, and Lyddie had helped it out. Enoch Willoughby had been half expecting it, but he had thought it must occur in some miraculous way. Three knocks might have been heard at midnight, just above the sleeping head of William Price; and then a voice coming from the pillow, saying, "Arise, William Price, go to the house of Enoch Willoughby, and make thy peace with his sister-in-law, for she is comely and is about to become thy son's wife in spite of thee and all the devils," and then William Price would arise in a trance, and lo—. But why go on? Perhaps I am simply making this up in order to give more clearly the character of the visions that appeared to his kind of imagination; and let us not be too sure, either, that they might not actually have appeared.

The next day, about the same hour, namely at eventide, when men go into the libraries and shut the door and put on their slippers, it came to pass that William Olney came to William Price and said: "Father, I am come to hear thy decision."

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

"My decision, my son," William Price replied, "is that I have been to see Lyddie O'Mara and I think better of her. She is comely and modest and spiritually minded. I can no longer think hard of her or of thee. I may even say I desire that she become thy wife."

And then they shook hands—a pretty hard squeeze, not looking very squarely into each other's faces, and William Price said softly: "Perhaps thee had better call mother, Olney." He did sometimes address him thus familiarly. Then, after his son had gotten well out of the door into the hall, William Price hurriedly took his handkerchief out of his coat-tail pocket and wiped his eyes.

And now one might think this history was pretty nearly over. In describing this last scene, later, to Lyddie, William Olney said what followed was very much like a love-feast. After his mother came in and heard the good news, they called his sister Sally, and the two women, especially his mother, had not known how to say enough good things about Lyddie.

"Thy ears must have tingled, Lydia," William Olney said afterward in recounting it, and then followed a scene that probably might as well be omitted. What kind of love scene would one like to be absent from least, I wonder? Certainly not that kind which is begun by touching a young woman's ear, and as exactly

THE BETROTHAL

this act was what William Olney had been guilty of it seems perfectly idiotic to remain longer attempting to describe this scene.

When they got through and came to their senses sufficiently to talk in a manner intelligible to people who were not suffering from the same malady as themselves, they found they had a good many real things to talk about:—in the first place, the fixing of the wedding day, which *must* be soon, this staid Quaker insisted. It might have been rather hard for him to find an intelligible reason why. Then, next, father Price had desired, as their house was large, the young people should live with them, and this seemed to both of these dreamers a very happy arrangement. The wedding, too, must be given out in meeting, and they naturally wondered what the Swains and Meaders, the Allens and Wootons and Faucetts and Places and Morrows and everybody would think and say about it.

They discussed the Quaker marriage ceremony. Both of them agreed in thinking it the most beautiful marriage ceremony that ever was invented.

“Does thee think thee can learn it by heart, Lydia, so as to stand up before the whole meeting-house full of people, and say thy part off without a mistake?”

Lyddie felt very certain she could do that and

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

thought most likely William Olney would make the worst blunder, unless perhaps his recent committing to memory of Bible passages had helped out his memory. And so she twitted him on attempting to quote that long passage from Mark's Gospel not long ago. "Thee remembers," she said—there was something desperately sweet about these ungrammatical thee's—"I'm sure thee did not get it right; and, as thy part to say in the ceremony is longer than mine, I am sure thee is very likely not to get that right."

But William Olney thought the parts were about the same length, and Lyddie was sure the man's part was a little longer. The Discipline had to be brought into requisition; Lyddie had to go and hunt up the book.

But Lyddie met her sister, and Hannah saw she had the Quaker Discipline in her hand. Now Hannah had some thoughts in her mind that she could not very well repress. We must remember that she saw or thought she saw how things were going. She was something of a seer too in her way. Her imagination also had been running on ahead. She already saw Lyddie a rich Quaker preacher, as far separated from her and from her own family as the antipodes. Of course, she could weep over it too; and then again would not mind tearing somebody's eyes out about it. She could call Lyddie

THE BETROTHAL

a little Quaker hypocrite, yet if any one else had dared to call her such a name, Hannah would have risen in her wrath and devoured that person. It is useless to attempt to describe all the circumstances. We must remember that Hannah had herself spoken in meeting, and taken great credit to herself for it. The opportunity of doing so any more was now gone. She would be only a despised spiritual medium if she were anything, but Lyddie would stand in high places.

Hannah never repressed her words, and now when she saw Lyddie with the Discipline, her thoughts were running over. It only took a glance for Hannah to know what the book was. In a moment she guessed what they had been talking about. She would have said it was a spirit inspiration that told her, though we rather think it was her quick imagination.

She came up to Lyddie, and, pointing at the book, she began—and, for the moment, she was a prophetess, a seer, a Cassandra—"I see, I see," she said; "but don't imagine for a moment thee has conquered them; that would be deceptive flattery to thyself. They will find the cloven hoof in thee some day and thee in them. Thee is preparing for a worse separation than thee ever imagined; binding the bonds the tighter, that they may break with the louder snap. They have taken thee up and will trans-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

plant thee, but they will shake every particle of the mother earth off thy roots and place thee in the driest of sterile soil; thy leaves shall wither and shrink for lack of the breath that used to blow upon them, and not one of thy kind shalt thou see in the whole region round about thee. Farewell, sweet sister, farewell forever; go to thy new-found friends and learn gradually to lie to the world and even to thyself; gather in the sweet successes of life, and turn thy back on the spirit that came to thee in our humble home in our new and despised religion. No one can blame thee. Live and enjoy it if thee can."

"Fie!" Lyddie cried out, "is this the blessing thee would send out with me?" And then Hannah broke down and cried, and Lyddie took her in her arms and consoled her. She knew it was only her emotion, the thought of the parting, the trouble with the church; and so she went on back to William Olney with the Discipline in her hand.

We must not forget here, while the wedding is approaching, to chronicle a quite unexpected event, apparently of no importance, but one that bore a little fruit later on. It was no more nor less than Abijah Willetts's moving South.

No one knew he had been expecting to go. He went to the Reserve, a place that has been mentioned before, and will be heard of again. He took a new span of horses with him. He

THE BETROTHAL

bought them the day before, and promised to pay for them the day after—but that was little for Abijah. He was followed and arrested, and would have been brought back had he not actually talked the owner of the team into letting him go on. He was such a soft-voiced, gentle-faced old sinner, no one could believe ill of him when in his presence. He actually talked the owner into believing it was a perfectly honest transaction, that he simply had not found it convenient to pay for the horses that day, but intended to remit the amount the moment he arrived at his destination.

The owner was mentally cursing himself all the time he was relenting. "I know I'm being fooled, cheated," he was saying to himself; "that he's sleek and rotten and soft-voiced and hypocritical; but I can't help it; he talks like an angel, with his good old round face smiling out at me from among his wife and children. Let him go; I know I'll never see a cent of the money again, but damn the money, you can't arrest a man like that from the bosom of his family and carry him off with a religious halo around his head into imprisonment and perpetual disgrace."

And so he relented and let him go; and Abijah went on his way rejoicing, and never again thought of paying for the horses. He said to himself, "He couldn't arrest me anyway; it was

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

only a breach of trust," and was perfectly satisfied because he was fulfilling the letter of the law.

Abijah left a wretched name behind him; that is one consolation. The wicked are punished in the minds of men, even if they get no punishment in reality.

XXI

DEVELOPMENTS

IN some respects Hannah had been perfectly right in her prophecy. William Price was never reconciled to the new doctrine ; that would have been impossible. But the strong feeling he had for his son, Lyddie's influence on his wife, Rachel, and the fact that Lyddie belonged to the church and was not known as a spiritualist, and moreover was not a Willoughby, all influenced him. He remembered Enoch Willoughby's words : "She will become whatever her husband is." That was most likely true ; they would take her into the family, surround her in every way with different influences ; she would become and remain a good Friend, perhaps a Quaker preacher, and that would be all the better. It was true, the family needed a little touch of spirituality, a little sensitizing of the sympathetic nerves.

Such were William Price's thoughts. But when he came to see Lyddie, and she appeared before him as a young Saint Theresa or Joan of Arc in a condition of spiritual exaltation, he did, for the time being, lose all his early calculated

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

plans for the future. He yielded unconditionally, overcome, as we have shown, by a set of circumstances, we hardly know what. It was a true overcoming, a real surrender on all sides. But would it last? Was this only a lull in that storm we have taken as a symbol of this difficulty? Ah! that remains to be seen.

Now, if there ever was a soul in the world that was true, and wanted to be true to itself and to everyone around it, this soul was to be found in the body of Lyddie O'Mara. And yet she was gradually placing herself in a situation where it was becoming very difficult indeed for her to remain true to herself or anything.

The marriage was made, as all hindrances were removed. Lyddie was installed in the Price family; the honeymoon came first, with its journey to Providence and attendant diversions. After it had come to an end Lyddie before long pretty nearly took control of the whole household. She was given so much attention, so much deference was paid to her, she was so sweetly reasonable and of such good judgment it soon came to seem as though this family, that needed nothing before, now had excess and superfluity of good qualities. They attended the Quaker meeting regularly; a very pleasant intimacy arose gradually between Lyddie and her father-in-law. Lyddie was fond of conversing on religious matters, and had, for a young woman, a

DEVELOPMENTS

wonderful insight into spiritual things; and in this, too, she ruled the family. She became a kind of oracle on all such subjects. Her quotations from Scripture, which she had mostly from the remembrance of their constant repetition at home, they never disputed. When she spoke in meeting, for she did now sometimes do that, her words were looked upon as of very great importance, and weighed and considered. Every opportunity was put in her way of making what she pleased of herself.

When the first grandchild was born in the family her situation was in every way pleasant. Yet she had little twinges of conscience even before that. She remembered Hannah's prophecy and she began to see some indications of its fulfilment. She knew that her sister reproached her for not having visited them on her return from the wedding journey, and she knew what she was saying in her mind of her. We must remember Lyddie's relation in that family had been more that of a daughter than aught else; now she began to dread to speak of visiting her sister. The Willoughbys came to be very seldom mentioned at the Prices, and then less and less frequently. Her position in the family of her husband was, however, made pleasanter and pleasanter. It seemed to be a delight to these people to spend money for their daughter-in-law, and in many matters in which they would

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

not have spent a penny on themselves they seemed to consider expense the proper thing for Lyddie. For instance, the Quaker styles were changing; while the elderly women still adhered to their drab dresses, scoop bonnets, and neckerchiefs, the younger people had assumed a more modern style, and Rachel and Sally Price delighted in the change for Lyddie, though they could not overcome their dislike to assuming it themselves. So, too, her newly-found uncle and aunt, those Prices in Providence, had taken Lyddie into favor, and fairly overwhelmed the new couple—who were the only young married people in the whole Price family—with presents. Caleb Price was a man of considerable wealth and no children, and William Olney would naturally some day fall heir to his property. It is needless to try to disguise the fact that all Lyddie's surroundings tended to convince her of the necessity of quietly forgetting her connection with a certain family of religious dreamers, who had happened to bring her up and educate her and provide for her until her marriage.

Still Lyddie was a woman of strength of character; the struggle between spiritual and worldly things was only just beginning in her, and what she might finally be led to do would be very difficult to say. She felt instinctively that it was unpleasant for everyone concerned

DEVELOPMENTS

for her to make a visit to the Willoughbys, and put off doing so as long as possible. Another fact she had recently learned : William Price had not given his business into the hands of his son or made him active possessor of any portion of his estate in such a way that he might not, if need be, take the whole matter immediately into his own hands again.

In this Lyddie felt there was great injustice. Their manner of living and their expenses, Lyddie knew, were far in excess of what would be justified by their salary alone, or commission, or whatever form of support William Price had allowed his son. If that was all and was to be all, it behooved them to live sparingly and to begin already to provide for their future. Every day they put off doing this the more difficult it would become and the more dependent they would finally be upon William Price's good will and ultimate action. Lyddie did not like worldliness in any of its forms ; she was independent. She had made up her mind when she consented to this marriage that what was essential in religion was the same in all religions, and, feeling that she could carry this essential something with her, she thought it made little difference to what church she belonged ; but she had no idea of slighting or scorning her own people because they were Spiritualists. On the contrary, her soul was full of gratitude to them. She loved

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

her sister, though she knew she was emotional and liable to say and do quick and hasty things, and there began to grow up within her a scorn and dislike of herself, to think that she could even have the appearance of ingratitude or narrowness.

She knew what her sister would be saying of her: "O, Lyddie? Yes, she is one of those bigoted orthodox; it won't be long till she wouldn't cross the street on Sunday to save a man's life; she'll soon be as bad as old Abijah Willetts. She knows on which side her bread is buttered." Lyddie could not endure these thoughts. They were not just and yet Hannah could hardly be blamed for entertaining them.

Of one thing she felt confident—that was of her husband's affection; and, with her husband on her side, she could fight through on any line of opposition she might think best to choose. But this was another of her worst difficulties. Responsibilities are our greatest masters, and in one sense the greatest slave is he who is possessed of most responsibility. This, by her very nature, Lyddie had assumed. She had always been taught to follow her reason, but she could not at times avoid reasoning from expediency.

She would find herself saying: "If it is a question of the prosperity of my husband and children, should I not concede something? Is not the stake in life greater than the loss in

DEVELOPMENTS

principle? What is principle, anyway? In one man it is a whim; in another, a vision; in another, an expression of law, itself perhaps fixed by caprice; in another, a tradition; again, it is opposition or emotion, a merest obstinacy; and who can be sure that his greatest principle is anything but the greatest illusion? Who can be sure that his religion is not finally an excess of emotion or mental exaltation—except in the case of Enoch Willoughby and a few like him? They are sure of themselves, but they too might be mistaken. Then there remains the simple balancing up of the good of one's friends, and what friend can be nearer, for what friend should one do more, than for the husband of one's heart and the child in one's bosom?"

And then, if she thought of Enoch Willoughby, she would blush for very shame that such thoughts could ever have passed through her mind. With him principle was everything, because it was eternal; while the world and all that there is in it is but ephemeral as a day. And how sure such a man's course must be. With what satisfaction he must review his acts! How he can mark out a line and hew to it!

And yet, what would be the outcome of such a character, uncompromising, unyielding? His so-called principles were sure to get him into trouble, were constantly doing so. And the man always welcomed the trouble as a test of the

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

principle and of his adherence to it. Born for a martyr was such a man! While she—she was born to wear silk dresses like Rachel Price, to discuss the height and depth of Solomon's temple and such other empty Scriptural formality as might be intelligible in a materialist's ear.

These were the kind of reasonings that passed through Lyddie's mind and were communicated to her husband, for she said they should not be divided even in thought. William Olney perceived all the depth and greatness of this woman's soul and was thankful that he had been given a wife of understanding, and not a frivolous, light-minded creature.

"Lyddie," he said to her, "I feel that I am just beginning rightly to fall in love with thee; thy reason and sweet intellect almost relieve me from the need of having any on certain matters. I am sure that, with thy understanding, whatever thee does will be right; and I am sure thee will be considerate of my people as thee is of thy own, and further than that I can ask nothing."

So then Lyddie was left as much in the dark after this searching conversation with her husband as before. And with it all she felt a kind of contraction coming over her soul, a shrivelling, drying-up process. At first she had spoken in meeting, and so kept the flame burning that had been lighted within her. But in some way speaking was beginning to die out in the church;

DEVELOPMENTS

a number of people had gone away. The shrinking process had begun when the Willoughbys had absented themselves from the meeting. Enoch Willoughby's powerful and wretched emotional speaking had made all other seem good and easy by contrast. And then the Willettses had gone. Abijah Willetts was no dull light spiritually, though he was an old rascal, and many had fears lest, after all, his religion might be genuine; it would have been a pity if so great a rascal had had genuine religion, and it did seem like it to hear him speak.

Then the younger women speakers had gradually grown out of the speaking habit. Caroline Wootton had married and moved away; Caroline Fawcett had married and become rather hard and practical; she could make a motion in the woman's part of the meeting, or would work well on a committee, but she seemed to have no inspiration any longer. Calinda Place had turned to music—which, too, had lately been taken up in the meeting—and expended her excess of emotion in leading the singing, while Lucinda Morrow had gone into mission work, and there was no one left but Mary Swain, and she very seldom spoke. The Swains, too, were talking of moving to the Reserve.

Lyddie found, when she yielded to the spirit in meeting, it was now somewhat noticeable. Everybody remembered that she had been with

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

the spiritualists, and the presence of this hostile thought cast a chill upon her and banished the spirit like a flash of light. Besides, gradually, at the Prices they came to speak less frequently of her performances of this kind, until finally she came to feel after it at home always a kind of chilly void, through which she had to wade several days before it would warm up and fill. Sometimes she asked herself what had become of that flood of spirituality that had been rained down over this whole settlement. It seemed once as if everybody, from old Uncle Allen down, had been spiritually minded; the young women all potential Lucretia Motts, and the young men all possible George Foxes or Amos Hoags.

But now it was different. She began to ask herself what life was for; what was there in it; what did it mean? It began to seem dull and stale. She had discussed the quality of cloth, the style and cost of garments, the arrangement of furniture and rooms, the harmony of colors with Rachel and Sally Price until those subjects seemed to be pretty nearly exhausted. She was like an actress who has been thrilled by applause, and longs for the sensation again; like the old war-horse that idly hangs his head over a too full manger, and dreams of the days when he rushed into battle to the blare of the trumpet and the beat of the drum. Who that has once felt the inpouring of the life-giving spirit, whether

DEVELOPMENTS

through pen, speech, or action, but remains all his life waiting and receptive for another influence?

Lyddie remembered Hannah's speaking, how easily the spirit came upon that Ramsdell woman, and how sure Enoch Willoughby was of being caught up by the power. Once only had that power come over Lyddie with all-conquering force—the time she had last spoken to William Price. That seemed now to her like the performance of a miracle; and yet she knew that William Price had said afterward "she seemed considerably excited, that was all." Excited! Was that what he called excited? She had never been calmer in her life.

She did not even like to talk of the Bible any longer, for the only parts of it that people seemed to understand were the commandments and the law of Moses. "Merciful heaven!" she wanted to cry, "keep me from forming harsh judgments; but these people are so narrow, so material, so little; what shall I be forced some time to do?"

She began to feel that life was a burden. She sometimes imagined she had turned her back upon the spirit and committed the unpardonable sin. She wondered what the Prices would say or do if she should go to a spiritual meeting and sit in a circle and be influenced and speak. They would hush it up and conceal it if possible. They would think she was mad. If the fact was known they would *say* she was mad,

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

and, if not for her husband, might easily put her into confinement. But Lyddie had always intended to do what she thought was right; had never intended that her own will, much less her own actions, should be controlled; she felt that she ought to lead others rather than be led by them. Slowly and gradually she was coming to a conclusion.

XXII

THE VISIT FROM LITTLE JAMES

THIS conclusion was hastened by another event; nothing more important indeed than a visit from her nephew, that little James whom she loved with all an elder sister's affection. The boy was quick and passionate like his mother, but had always been more subject to Lyddie's guidance than hers. Lyddie had controlled and moderated his transports of anger and joy and childish emotion, and she had thereby learned to love the boy as we all learn to love those who loyally follow our guidance and depend upon us.

The Prices felt instinctively they ought to be most careful and polite to this little friend of Lyddie's, and they were so; nor was there any depreciation when they announced to Lyddie that little Jimmy Willoughby was waiting to see her.

We ought to consider the early associations of these two. How many times in the old days, when Enoch had acted strangely under some torturing influence of the spirit, little James and Lyddie had crept away upstairs together, and

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

sat with their arms about each other in very fear and trembling before the Lord; and then, how they had comforted each other, Lyddie keeping the boy calm and upholding his respect for his father. "It will soon pass off, Jimmy," she would say, and then would point out how good that father was and gentle and kind to the boy; seldom punishing or reproving, and never scolding; and so they had quieted each other and remained together in Lyddie's room until the boy had fallen asleep, or until the influence had departed. It is idle to expect such old associations as these to be at once destroyed by a marriage. It was well the Prices did not offend this boy. I can imagine the gentlest tigress, purring contentedly under the caresses of her friendly domesticators, out of her sleepy eyes lazily watching her cub, which someone is calmly stroking down its yellow nose; but let that cub give one single cry of pain, and that tiger would be Lyddie if they had offended the boy.

No one had thought of offending him. Everyone knew it would be better to wait until the grandchild was born; the mother instincts then that now were concentrated on this little friend would hold and check her. They had been kind to Lyddie, wonderfully kind; though they had forgotten and wanted to forget where she came from and what she was. But Lyddie had not forgotten.

THE VISIT FROM LITTLE JAMES

"Mother says you won't come to see us any more, and so I determined I'd come and see you anyway just once, Tid."

The boy tried to laugh as he used the old nickname, and felt a little shock as he thought of applying it to Lyddie in all these new and wonderful surroundings. But Lyddie saw the boy's lip quiver and knew all about it in a moment.

"Thy mother is mistaken, James," she said, "and she misjudges me greatly. I have been doing wrong, though, and what I knew was wrong, by not going to see you." And then she sat down by the boy and did as she had done a hundred times before; she told him everything as if he were entirely capable of understanding, as indeed he was.

"It is a great question of duty, James," she said at last. "What ought I to do?"

The boy understood and appreciated the situation. "You'd better give us all up, Tid," he said; "I'm old enough to know that there is nothing in it." That "it" was a bigger word than it seemed. And then followed some boyish wisdom. "I know there isn't any God," the boy said bitterly and passionately, "or any heaven, or any earth, except just what you see; there is no such thing as a spirit, good or bad; we *don't* live after we die, we only *rot*. It's all nonsense and people's imagination. The only sensible men in the world are those that believe

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

nothing. Those that believe in God are slaves and fools to all the rest. If you can make anything by staying here and cutting us and forgetting us, I'd do it; it's the sensible thing. Of course, we'll feel bad for a little while, but that's no matter, we'll get over it. It's what everybody does as far as I can see, and I'm going to learn to do as other people do."

And then Lyddie attempted to soothe and pacify, but it was no longer easy. She had already placed herself in a position where her actions were liable to false interpretations, and she had not yet decided. For a long time she had been going over the words "He who would save his life shall lose it." "Life" meant to her the worldly, material life first, and next it meant that better spiritual life of principle, which she knew, and understood, and ought to follow. She felt instinctively that the boy was right, that to turn and tack and catch the favoring breeze and run before the storm was the way to make progress on the ocean of life, while over that other ocean of eternity there was but one straight course marked out by the conscience and leading to the very throne of the Most High.

She was again for a moment a seer; flashes of inward light revealed to her vistas of the future. She knew that at the end of one of these must be a nameless grave, hovered over

THE VISIT FROM LITTLE JAMES

and guarded by an immortal spirit of lasting memory and imperishable glory. At the end of the other was a deceptive monument recording in lying characters the virtuous deeds of a worldly and selfish woman. Should she have respect to the world, or should she only be true to herself? She could not decide ; she must have time.

She took the boy up to her rooms, her own part of the house. She interested him in every way she could think of ; she kept him talking. She had it in mind to have the carriage brought round and take him back with her. "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul." These words would constantly come to her, but the boy went home alone.

He had not had a good visit with Aunt Tid ; she had not talked to him as she used to do ; she had been a little cool and stiff.

Hannah said now she was indeed ready to go to another country. She had no sister living any longer in this. And before Lyddie had a chance to redeem herself her people had gone.

There comes in here also the momentous love story of two children, of little James and Susie Beatty. It is not necessary to laugh at them because they were young ; they could be just as sensibly foolish and foolishly sensible ; just as

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

pathetic and woe-begone; quarrel and make up and dream about one another night and day, be thrilled by a touch of the hand or sigh at the thought of blue eyes or red lips or wavy hair, just as well as older people.

In fact, no one, old or young, could be more desperately in love than little Jimmie was with Susan Beatty. She was the adopted daughter of Doc Beatty, who has been mentioned before, and soon concentrated upon herself all the boy's affection for the whole family, dogs, cats, musical instruments, and all. Even that medicinal odor, that brought up the whole paradise of the doctor's house, now settled in his fancy around Susie, and out of it seemed to grow the most charming face of the most beautiful girl, and yet he knew distinctly when and where and how the tender passion first came into his heart.

It was while the 'Gene worship still glowed high on the altar of his youthful affection, and the doctor's old horse and Newfoundland dog still shared in it, that it all came about, namely in the following fashion: The doctor had taken Susie with him to visit his patients, and on the rounds had stopped at the Willoughbys', and there had left the girl while he made a side trip to a place to which he did not wish her to accompany him. It was growing dark; the doctor was detained; the girl became afraid. The doctor was not a man to take

THE VISIT FROM LITTLE JAMES

spirits out of the body very much into his calculations; it is doubtful if he considered those in it to any great extent. The idea that Susie should become afraid of spirits at the Willoughbys', and begin to cry, never entered his mind; but she did. The girl was left alone in the sitting-room, and at first amused herself by looking at the old photograph album; then she got up and touched the keys of the melodeon, and went over to the window and looked out. The house was on the edge of the woods; it was already growing dark; the wind was sighing through the trees. The girl was not used to the country; it looked lonely and desolate outside. She wondered what the people were doing. Why did not some one come and sit with her? Would the doctor be away long? She missed everything that she was used to, and suddenly—oh why did she think of that—the Willoughbys were spiritualists!

Instantly a great terror seized upon the girl; she looked and expected to see the room full of ghosts; she did not dare move a foot or finger, or stir from the room or even from the window. She was paralyzed from the fear of her own imagination. Suddenly one of her knees grew weak and began to tremble. She must sit down. But to sit down in that dark room, in that place—the thought of it was too much for her. She heard a noise; she gave a stifled

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

scream, covered her face, and sank on a sofa in the corner and burst out crying.

"Why, Susie, what is the matter?"

It was Hannah who was coming into the room to stay with her. She had been thinking the little girl might be afraid or lonesome, and made haste to come in as soon as she could. But when the girl saw her she was frightened the more. Whether it was the thought of the spirits, or Hannah's tall form, or the fact that she was a stranger, or whatever it was, Hannah saw the girl was in danger of a fit of hysterics; and remembering that James was acquainted with the doctor's family, and might be able to quiet her, she rushed out and called him to come in.

As soon as the boy appeared, Susie recognized a familiar face. The spirits fled away like a flash.

"Oh, I am so afraid," she said.

"Why, what are you afraid of," the boy asked.

"I don't know, I don't know; I'm just afraid," the girl said; and then she begged him not to go away until the doctor came back. The boy reassured her and took the photograph album over to show her the pictures of his aunts and cousins. He sat down by her on the sofa, and Susie took hold of his arm and held him close, and then they sat and talked; and as they talked it grew darker outside. The doctor

THE VISIT FROM LITTLE JAMES

was still delayed. Finally the girl slipped her hand into the boy's hand and then took hold of it and pressed it. The boy returned the pressure.

"And you were crying because you were afraid right here in our house," he said to her.

"I was so foolish, so foolish," she replied; "but I am not afraid any longer. I was not afraid any longer after you came," and just then the doctor drove up.

No one mentioned what had happened. The doctor was in haste and drove off soon; but now the young lovers had become acquainted.

And then there had followed that delightful period of young love, that is altogether too good to describe, when the touch of a finger would be remembered a week, and a look cast at some one else would send the heart sinking down to unfathomable depths of jealous pain. Then might perhaps come the sweet intoxication of a few minutes together; then a fierce fight with Jim Harris, because he said that "Susie was a flirt and coquette and didn't care for anybody as far away as you could see him in the woods."

And then had come finally the breaking off; oh, woe, indeed! And in this case the spirits did it too, for the child lovers quarrelled about religion, a deep, heavy, eternal quarrel. Two hearts that beat as one were now henceforth

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

to beat as two; and words were passed back and forth; deep, dreadful words like these:

“I think a Hixite is as good as a Spiritualist any day of the week,” and vice versa. And now how they hated one another!

“That little flirt of a Susie” and “That little stupid of a Jim!” So that little James was quite ready to go to the Reserve along with the rest of his people.

XXIII

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

THERE succeeded a time when Lyddie, too, looked into the depths. Lyddie now passed through a period like that of a man distracted with the pangs of misprised love. Of course, her trouble was in the imagination, but it was none the less real for all that. There is no doubt Lyddie felt like one who had cursed God and was beginning to wither away and die. Everyone noticed that there was something the matter with her, but no one could tell what it was. She had no interest in anything about her. She passed sleepless nights ; she was often distraught ; she sought solitude as if it were her only refuge. She actually came to fear to be with the people about her lest she might say or do something amiss. She shuddered often at her imagination, and forcibly brought herself back to the world around her. There is no doubt that the effect of the strange teachings and theories of Enoch Willoughby had much to do with her condition. She felt that she had shut out from herself the spirit world, and from base motives ; that she had been ashamed to take up

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

and confess before her husband's people her greatest benefactor; the spirit that had conquered a kingdom for her was not to be allowed a dwelling-place in that kingdom. She hated herself. She felt all the gnawings of remorse; she felt hate springing up in her soul against every one and bitterness that turned her lip to sarcasm and her voice to acidity. She knew she was in danger; she felt that her love for her husband had left her heart; she almost hated him. She lay by his side at times, on awaking in the morning, and thought of him with repugnance as a piece of cold, dead flesh lying beside her.

"Something is the matter with Lyddie Price," everybody said. She became indifferent to how she lived, to how she was clothed, to what she ate. The people in the house became a little afraid of her. She would not go to the Quaker meeting or elsewhere. The Prices said as little as possible about her, but she was talked about in the neighborhood. She grew thin and pale, with great rings under her eyes. Once, before the Willoughbys left, her young brothers came to see her; they had heard she was not well. But she did not care to see them. And yet, all this time there was the most perfect understanding between herself and her husband. She told him her feeling, her inward experiences, even her hatred of him, her imaginings of his soul-

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

less materialism, of her thoughts of suicide. But always she would say, "I shall get over it; it is the spirit working in me. I do not know what it is going to do, or how or when, but it is leading me somewhere through a vast amount of bitter experience, and it may be for my own good. I shall get over it, and whatever it counsels me to do I shall have to do."

And then she asked her husband if he remembered what she had said to him long ago, before they were married, about her being compelled to get up on a cold morning and drive off miles into the country on some foolish errand.

William Olney remembered and was ready now, as he had ever been, to make himself the willing slave of Lyddie's spirit. And so the poor woman worked with herself and fought the devil and shame and the world and the spirit, but could get no rest and no light, until she began to be afraid of herself, afraid that in her confusion she might not retain the thread of sanity. Her prayers were pitiful in the extreme.

"She's going like her sister Ruth in Ohio," some said, "and will be a stupid crone in her old age, to sit senselessly by the fire and intone aloud Pinneo's Grammar and Hostetter's Almanac."

Others said: "She has the excitable nature of her sister Hannah and it has gone in on her."

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

"It is her condition," still others said, "just at this time."

"It is religion working upon her," said Mary Swain.

Others said openly : "The woman is losing her mind and will be in an insane asylum before many months."

And poor Lyddie felt an oppression upon her that she could not bear. It was like a physical ailment. She could not sleep. She would have the impulse to leap from the upper window and crush herself upon the pavement. At meals when sitting under William Price's silent blessing she could hardly avoid shouting out. But this is enough to show her condition. What was the remedy?

It suddenly flashed upon her she must go back. Her own people were gone, but there were others. There were those two women, Susan and P'lene. She began to think more and more about them. Perhaps it was not true that all religions are essentially the same. What had come to her had come to her as spiritualism, and she must acknowledge it as that. It was Enoch Willoughby's vision worked over again in another form. Were we after all only the instruments of something higher? It all cleared up to her now. She felt confident that that was what was wanted of her. She would obey. She would do everything in her power,

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE.

and no fear or shame should keep her from it. She believed her husband would not lose faith in her, and there returned immediately into her heart a great wave of kindly feeling. She would no longer be a hypocrite. She could now respect herself and love the world and all in it. She began to feel better in every way.

When William Olney came home that day the clouds had gone. He asked her what had changed her.

"Thee's so like thyself I hardly know thee," he said with pleasing paradox, and Lyddie told him of her "opening," her "inspiration." She must go back, she said, even if it was the cause of their being disinherited.

Then William Olney replied: "I have long thought there might be something of that kind the matter with thee; you are all strange people, unlike others, and I do not understand you at all; but I have always thought thee was much like thy brother-in-law, Enoch Willoughby, whom I respect and like in many ways; and though I think we should be careful not to offend my people, yet I have married thee. I love thee, Lyddie; I love every little thing about thee, even to thy most foolish fancies. We are young and strong, life is open before us, we will not be slaves to the prospect of an inheritance. Tell me what thy spirit says for me to do, Lydia, and I will do it even to the half of my kingdom."

ENOCH · WILLOUGHBY

And Lyddie replied in the same spirit of humor and sadness.

"I am very much afraid, William Olney, it will be even to the whole of thy kingdom," she said, "for I am sure thy father will disinherit us; but I thank thee for being the best and truest husband that ever lived."

Lyddie's conscience had been troubling her. She thought she had done wrong, and the more she thought about it, the more hateful her offence seemed. Her imaginative mind ran through the future in a thousand directions; but however she looked at it she could see no relief for herself, no escape from her false position, except by what she had called "going back." She had begun to feel her position first when the gradual breaking up of her connection with the Willoughbys began; then when she had been visited by little James. After all, she did not believe it was the spirit driving her; it was herself. Lyddie had no great faith in any mission of hers; she was not called in any way as Enoch Willoughby had been, except to do right, to be true to herself. The moment she felt she was not true to herself she became miserable; while the moment she turned as her conscience pointed she became satisfied with herself and happy.

"Very well, Lyddie," William Olney said, at the close of their conversation, "shall we pro-

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

claim it from the housetops, 'Lydia Price has gone over to the spiritualists?' "

"Nay, do not jest," Lyddie said; "it is very sad."

"Yes, Lyddie, it probably is," William Olney replied, "and I am not much given to seeing the humorous side of things, but I cannot avoid smiling when I think of certain phases of thy situation; how anxious thee is to make a martyr of thyself, how thee would like to have the church try *thee* for heresy, how thee would like to have my father disinherit us, and all to satisfy thy conscience."

But Lyddie checked him.

"I am sure," she said, "thy father has already begun to cast us out of his heart; and only to consider that side of it is very sad. I have learned to like thy father, almost to love him as a daughter. He is a strong nature, of a certain kind that attracts me. There is something about him that is as persistent and constant as about Enoch Willoughby's visions. I can see plainly he will never yield, as he has never really yielded. Do not think for a moment I am considering our relation to his property. I know thee will not think me sordid or mercenary, but look at the man himself; consider his nature, his training, and his way of looking at things, and is there nothing pathetic to thee in the thought? He will bid us good-

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

by as he would if he saw us going down into destruction and himself incapable of lending a helping hand. And yet," she continued, "I feel that I have to do it or die, not a physical, but what is worse than that, a spiritual, death. I cannot help feeling that I am like that Simon who offered a price for the gift of the Holy Ghost. I must put myself in a different situation, or my life will be worth nothing."

"Very well," William Olney said, "shall I withdraw from my father's business, or shall I wait till the effect of thy action leads him to invite me to do so? Can thee not manage to satisfy thy conscience by some other subterfuge? Can thee not let it be known among some of thy friends that thee has changed thy belief, and still go to meeting occasionally? Go to the other meetings, but not too openly. Remember I am not advising thee to do this, but simply suggesting a course that would not be wrong for me, for to me it would make no difference what I was called or what I am as far as religion is concerned, as I once before told thee; and I thought it was pretty much the same with thee. It does not seem to me wise to sacrifice all our business prospects for an over-nice question of conscience, neither did it seem wise from a mere worldly stand-point to sacrifice such prospects, as I supposed I should have to do when about to make thee my wife. But we do not always follow the

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

counsel of worldly wisdom ; and, as I did not follow it then, so I shall not follow it now. Spare my father's feelings all thee can, but become and be as for thy conscience whatever thee likes."

And so Lyddie Price, already a believer in the new doctrine, began openly to speak about it. William Price said nothing, but the intimacy that had sprung up between him and his daughter-in-law was gradually dropped. There was no argument attempted, no effort at conversion ; the subject was simply avoided.

A gradual coolness was rising also between William Olney and his father, and the poor old gentleman suffered horribly.

"They are lost, they are lost," he often said to himself, "and they will be the cause of leading many astray, for their influence will be great among the young people."

He withdrew more and more into himself. He would not, must not, countenance them. The thought that their bad influence came largely from their connection with him and his wealth troubled him. He wished he did not possess anything ; that he might lose what he possessed. He could not break with his son and still enjoy prosperity himself, and yet perhaps he ought to break with him. The old gentleman was growing pale and thin over his mental distress, and yet, as Enoch Willoughby would have said,

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

"There wasn't very much the matter; those people only needed to know one another better, to talk about things and reason about them, and come to an understanding."

"What Lyddie needs," Hannah most likely would have said, "is another good attack of 'spiritual influence'; let her call up the spirits and fly at old William Price again and that pretty soon, or she will lose all she has gained, and may not get the old Quaker's money after all."

"Oh, if he had no money," Lyddie said over and over, "and no friends or relations but us, and was in affliction and grief and we could comfort him, he should never find son or daughter kinder."

Old William Price felt the pull on his affection, but turned resolutely away. How we can hate where we have once loved! For a long time he shut his eyes to the fact that Rachel was fond of Lyddie, fonder far than of her own daughter. That was another blow to him. He would come home and look about for "mother," and ask for her, only to be told "she was up in Lyddie's room." "In Lyddie's room"—that would be enough; he would go to the library and sit down to his solitary reading of Millman's Journal or George Fox's life, or the newspaper. If Lyddie heard him coming she would suggest to Rachel, "There comes father. Make haste, and

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

don't let him find thee with me or the house empty," and in every way she would be careful to soften the harsh feeling that was congealing between them, and she and Rachel Price talked about it and understood each other.

Lyddie went openly to several spiritual meetings, and her husband went with her. She had to go.

"It is not religion with me," she said, "it is conscience."

Again and again she thought of the "sins of the father being visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation." Religion does not by any means consist entirely of essential parts; two-thirds of it at least are in outward, inessential things. She felt the baseness of her situation. She felt at times even William Price might accuse her, with some show of reason, of hypocrisy. He might say she had lied to him and schemed to marry into the family and provide for herself at the expense of her conscience. What would she not do to avoid such imputation?

One day she had been thinking this side of it over when a woman called at the house and asked for Mrs. Price. It was that Susan Ramsdell of whom we have before spoken. The servant did not know her, and the woman did not seem to know just what to say when she was asked which Mrs. Price she meant. It happened that

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

William Price was called to the door to speak to her in explanation and Lyddie heard the conversation from upstairs. The woman seemed to be unable to make herself clear, until finally, by a lucky thought, she said it was "the spiritualist woman," whom she wished to see.

Then Lyddie could hear the tone of William Price's voice, suddenly and entirely changed.

"There is no spiritualist woman living here," he said; "I advise thee to seek lower down."

Just what he meant by the words "lower down" the woman plainly did not at first understand, for she stood a moment looking up and down the street. When she looked around again, the door had closed behind her and she slowly retreated.

Lyddie had heard the whole conversation. She understood well those last words, and knew they were meant for *her* ears rather than for those of the woman outside, and yet Lyddie was too good and charitable to become angry. She did have determination, however, and a conscience quick to respond. She immediately went down stairs, past William Price, even asking him to excuse her as she brushed against him in the door, and spoke to the woman outside; she could be plainly heard both within and without the house.

"They were mistaken in answering you," she said, "there is a spiritualist woman living here.

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

I am she. Is there anything? Will you come in. Oh, it is Susan Ramsdell."

For at that moment she recognized her, and then she urged her and the woman came in.

XXIV

SOME SEPARATIONS

THIS trivial incident brought about the rupture. Lyddie could hardly be blamed for it. She had already so much on her conscience she felt she could not have endured another period of self-reproach. It became plain that the families must separate. Had it better be before or after that coming event in anticipation of which she and Rachel Price were spending so many delightful hours together? It had perhaps better be soon. She was not likely to have another such visit, it is true, for the Ramsdell woman with her sister was about to follow the stream of emigration to the Reserve and had come at the request of Lyddie's sister, Hannah, to see Lyddie before she went away; but other things were very likely to arise. It would be best to make the change at once.

She decided to talk to her husband about it, and then began a series of events which changed everything.

And first, it was the death of Rachel Price, that good woman whom Lyddie had come to love almost as a mother. Her illness was brief.

SOME SEPARATIONS

Lyddie had been with her as much as possible, but had found her presence not desired in the sick-room ; she found she cast a restraint over William Price, that he avoided her ; and even at the funeral, in the face of that great event of nature that so often breaks down all the artificial barriers and allows hearts to come together in a moment that have remained apart for years, it was the same. Old William Price remained alone ; his daughter Sally of course was with him, but there could be little expression of sympathy between two such natures as theirs. It was Lyddie's heart that yearned for sympathy with the old gentleman. She knew that he suspected her of worldly motives. She could do nothing toward rendering his life less solitary and dreary without incurring the suspicion of trying to ingratiate herself with him.

The child was born, but before this event Lyddie and her husband had removed to another house. Lyddie had made up her mind that the right thing for them to do was to act as though there were no interested motives possible. Let the one who entertains suspicion of wrong motives suffer for entertaining such suspicion. So they invited the father-in-law to the house, but he did not come. He met his son at business every day, but their social relations did not extend further than that. They sent him notice of the birth of the boy, and he

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

returned them his congratulations by letter. "The innocence in the eyes of a grandchild," that Hannah had put into such ready words, did not seem yet to be "stronger than any religious belief." There are hearts of stone, and good hearts too in most respects, that when it comes to some foolish, simple phase of religion are not amenable to reason.

William Price determined to get his property out of his hands, that he might not be indirectly, even, an upholder of an "accursed superstition." He was too good a man to want to enjoy what one of his family did not possess. Sometimes we are willing to inflict only a punishment that we ourselves share. He determined to make a visit to his brother in Providence. He turned his property over to his daughter, absolutely, retaining very little for himself. Possibly he expected it would be returned to him later on. It may be he thought she would share it with his son, and in this way the responsibility would fall upon her; or it may be he thought she would keep it and the odium of depriving his son of any share in it would thus be taken away from himself. However that may be, he made over his property to his daughter and went on his visit.

No one would have supposed that Sally Price would have retained everything for herself, but she did. She was absolutely incapable

SOME SEPARATIONS

of generosity. There are natures with a consciousness of their own weakness so great that all possible aids and props are insufficient to make them feel secure. They retain everything they can lay hands upon from a feeling of the necessity of self-preservation. "Let them have it; they need it," is the best that can be said of them.

"We can do without it," is what William Olney and Lyddie Price said, and then, without malice, without envy, they went on their way enjoying life, happy, generous, and striving. It must be said, too, for Lyddie there was a deep sense of satisfaction that she could not now be accused of having obtained the Price wealth at the cost of her conscience.

But if William Price counted on receiving back from his daughter the control of his estate he had been misled. Weak natures, grasping at the supports of wealth, are likewise easily affected by flattery. Sally Price, before long, was attracted by a schemer, who married her for her money, and then succeeded in running through with the most of it; and, in her fight to save the remainder, in her struggle with a vicious nature, the woman hardened and contracted into one of those little, grasping, cunning souls, miserly and selfish. I suppose God made them, but so he did the weasel, the henhawk, and the blinking owl. Perhaps it is

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

better to say nothing more about it. She got the property, and kept it. She never helped old William Price, and he needed help before he died. Does any one suppose he would take it from those who were willing and able to give it? Not he, he would have died first. He had not been brought up in the way of his fathers to leave this way thoughtlessly and turn aside into the broad road to destruction.

William Olney was not deprived of all inheritance by his father's action. That uncle in Providence, by some change in the peculiar make-up of humankind—perhaps his proximity to Boston was the cause of it—had taken a turn to spiritualism. Who can relate the causes? It seemed to him these people had something of the old-fashioned Quaker about them. Perhaps he had met with that Biblical variety who really have spiritual and religious natures; at any rate, can be supposed honest, and not frauds or tricksters. However that may be, he was not alienated by Lyddie's claim of spiritualism; and when he died, which event occurred about this time, he left his property to his nephew.

"Lyddie," William Olney said to his wife, "perhaps thy conscience will allow thee to remain a good Quaker after all."

"If I bear the name and the reproach of the new sect," Lyddie replied, "I should think myself it might leave me at peace to do as I will."

SOME SEPARATIONS

But let us do everything we can to reconcile thy father."

And that was no easy matter. William Price had even left his brother's in Providence, because he said they were becoming tainted with the new heresy.

"My brother," he said, "has gone the way of the rest of investigators. Let a man pay the least attention to that heresy, let him incline his ear but in the least, and he is lost; he might as well give up at once. The Devil has that man in his clutches."

It was no use for Caleb Price to argue that it did not necessarily mean a separation from christianity; on the other hand that it meant its re-invigoration, the re-introduction of primitive faith.

"It will turn again to Christ, William," he said; "be sure it will; for, though these people do not speak of Christ much as yet and are more occupied with signs and omens, with miracles and visions, they will find these, as Jesus said, all unsatisfactory at last unless they are connected with a strong and great personality. That is what makes the Divine on earth. The place of all these people is in the church of Christ, and that is where they will eventually be found, with new insight and stronger faith. I tell thee the church itself is in danger, for it has lost the belief in the miraculous. It hoots at the

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

verity of dreams, and scoffs at presentiments and spiritual warnings; it derides the secret converse of the soul with God, and the spiritual world; it turns a deaf ear to the inward voice, and its greatest heroes of the modern days are such men as practise the dogmas of an absolutely unreligious morality; as though the deep lessons of Christ could be inculcated in mankind without the previous awakening of spiritual insight. As well might one expect the seed to germinate and grow on entirely uncultivated soil."

But we need not follow their conversation. William Price was uninfluenced by it.

"There is no religion in it," he said; "its place is not in the church; it is not new wine in old bottles, for it is not wine at all. It is nothing but acidity."

So he had left his brother's with anything but friendly feelings, and not long after that the brother had died. Then he returned home to Hesper, where he still owned a small house, and a little farm, from which he derived a moderate living. His daughter had removed to the city of Decorah. He seldom saw her. His life was solitary and without many comforts, but he would not allow his son or his son's wife to make it more cheerful. He preferred not to be connected with them. William Olney tried to interest him in his own business and get him to take some connection with it again. Not a

SOME SEPARATIONS

thing would he have to do with it. That precious grandchild of his he had never seen. He would have nothing to do with "tainted and heretical" blood. His obstinacy and reserve and solitude bade fair to turn into comedy pretty soon. People already said he was ridiculously foolish.

Meanwhile Lyddie had been going to the Quaker meetings again, and she and her husband were united in tender sympathy for the solitary old father. In the evenings they sat and talked together, or played with the child, and every once in a while would wonder what grandpa was doing; they never met at night but Lyddie asked her husband if he had seen father to-day, or how he was looking.

Lyddie always retained charity for him and never blamed him. "He cannot help it," she said, "any more than I could help being what I was, or any of us can help being what we are. The only thing is, as Enoch used to say, to overcome all prejudices by being better acquainted with one another."

But a way to bring that about seemed impossible. If William Price could be taken ill and brought into the house, then perhaps his prejudice might wear off; but there seemed to be no likelihood of such a thing.

Now all this time Lyddie was thought by her sister and by William Price simply to have

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

played a part, but she said as long as her husband believed in her, and as long as her own conscience was clear she should not much consider what people thought of her. Lyddie asked herself over and over what miracle could bring that old gentleman back to them and reconcile him to them before he died. Could any miracle do it?

Perhaps the only thing to do was to let him alone, but that was a matter of Lyddie's conscience and she could not cease from attempting to reconcile him. It was the one thing she was determined to accomplish. She thought about it day and night. She did trivial things, influenced solely by that thought. When she was out with the child in its carriage, she unconsciously took the street on which she felt she might meet William Price. She passed his house frequently; she thought of going in and pleading with him.

"Don't work thyself up into another spell," her husband said to her. "Don't get to thinking it is thy conscience again and so make thyself and everybody about thee miserable. It is now just as at the time of our marriage, a question of two against one, or rather now of three against one, for there is the baby to consider. As long as father has enough to live on and has proper care and attention, I shall not greatly worry." And so it continued.

SOME SEPARATIONS

Finally William Price *did* fall ill and was brought into their house for a time — much against his wishes, it must be confessed—and Lyddie and her husband nursed him with the greatest care, and yet he was not reconciled; and, when he recovered, he went back to his old habits and lived as before, and Lyddie felt that now all chance of reconciliation was gone. Lyddie Price was a strange person, like Enoch Willoughby, in some respects. She could not bear to have any one think ill of her; it gave her actual pain.

“What can I do; what can I do?” she asked herself, over and over, when thinking of her father-in-law. “What would Enoch Willoughby do in such a case?”

Her thoughts were kept still more on Enoch Willoughby by letters that she received from her nephew. James, indeed, was the only one that wrote to her. Hannah did not pour metaphorical coals of fire; she might possibly have poured real coals. She took no “stock” in Lyddie’s spiritualism.

“Her conscience hurts her a little,” she said, “and she has taken that very easy means of pacifying it.”

But little James loved that gentle aunt of his; the recollection of her was always with him. Often he wanted to pour out his soul to her as he did in the old days. His father was too

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

deeply hidden in spiritual clouds, his mother too changeable and too radical ; he missed the gentle and benign reason of Aunt "Tid." So he began the habit of writing to her, nearly always under the influence of some strong emotion ; sometimes a burst of anger, a feeling of tenderness ; sometimes religious zeal, or religious bitterness, if we may call it so ; and then he would add a few words about the new place and what was going on there.

Here is one of his letters.

DEAR AUNT TID :

We have come to the wildest and worst place in the world. I feel sure we've got nearly to the bottom of things. It is much worse here than it used to be there. The same old trouble with the Quakers is running on. Father and mother began going to meeting to Tonganoxie and that started the whole thing again. You know Abijah Willetts has moved to this neighborhood, and he had something to do with it. They've got another investigating committee appointed, and they come out here every week or so and talk religion and eat up all our best pullets, and then all those spiritualists have come in that used to live up near us, and they are about the place a great deal, talking religion too.

The Indians haven't been gone long from this place and they left their spirits behind, it seems, and these mediums have caught them. I call them manitous. They call it "speaking with tongues," but I think it would be hard work for them to find an interpreter.

O Tid, you don't know how I hate the whole thing.

SOME SEPARATIONS

I hate all religion ; I think they're crazy, all of them, the old Quaker women, and the spiritual mediums, and all of them. I go to the High School at Lawrence, and I intend to go to the college some day ; but I wouldn't have anybody know that my people are spiritualists for the world. I think I should die of shame. And father's doing everything he can to send me to school. I believe he'd take the last dollar he had to pay my board, and yet I wouldn't have him come down to school to see me for anything in the world. Sometimes I wish he was a catholic or an old atheist or anything that was respectable, I wouldn't care what. I'm going to be an Ingersollian.

Mother has gone over to the mediums and got very thick with them. The way it came about was, she was sick, and they thought she was going to die, and the Quakers heard of it, and some of the women folks thought it was too bad for her to die a spiritualist and go to the devil, so they appointed a committee to come and visit her ; mother had been sick on her back in bed for I don't know how long, but the moment those women came in, and began to talk to her about dying—you know how mother is—she took fire in a minute, and sprang out of bed, under the influence, and talked to them as though she had been sent to preach to them and not they to her. Mother is such an awful hater, you know ; she never forgave them for thinking she was going to die when she wasn't. It was a good deal such a time as she had when the Prices first came to visit us, you remember, only worse. Well, then, those women, Susan and P'lenc, came down from our old neighborhood, and they took mother up and encouraged her ; told her she would soon be well, that they had it from some mysterious source or other, and they

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

helped take care of her and came in often—too often, some of us thought—and now, since she's got better, she don't go with anybody else.

And then father is the same man he always was. Mother and I don't like the way he does at all, but as far as that goes, there don't any of us like what the others do. I don't like mother's going with Susan and P'lene so much, and mother thinks it foolish for me to go off to school—it's just because she knows I go with the Christians there—and father thinks mother makes all her religion herself, and mother thinks father's religion is all obstinaey and envy and came from his queer spells in meeting. But what I was going to say, was, he has the same habit of being "moved" to speak to people about their sins that he used to have, and it's a good deal worse here; he'd better be careful. There's a worse district here than that of old Nine Mile. It is called the "Big Stranger district," and there is the worst set of people there that ever settled in this country. They're awful. Some of them settled here among the Indians, and were squatters. They're raecoon hunters, and nearly all have foxhounds and live just any way, and father intends to go and talk spiritualism to them. It's dreadful. Mother and I tell him we think it would be a good deal better if they'd belong to somebody else's religion, but you know that's not father's way. Unele John's have come down too, and that same old story is to be gone through with. Well, good-by. I do wish you would come and see us.

Your aff. nephew,
JAMES WILLOUGHBY.

How Lyddie could picture the whole thing out to herself!

SOME SEPARATIONS

She knew that whole life with its strangeness and its intensity. She had herself gone through with it and come out into something so much better and clearer and purer, she felt a sweet satisfaction as she thought of her own home and her life, her husband, her child, and—but ah! there was a sting about it still. She yearned too for the people of her old home.

What a pleasure they did get once out of that religious wrangle; perhaps it was the pleasure of spiritual growth and expansion, which is not found in perfect characters: it is not the whole that have need of the physician. There was something pleasant about that old life. She would like to see it again. She would like to show her sister that she did not feel herself above her; she had none of those foolish notions that separate people on account of religious belief. Perhaps she would go and make them a visit some time.

And then came another letter from little James:

DEAR AUNT TID:

You know what an aggravating set of young ones Uncle John's children used to be, and you remember what trouble father had with the oldest ones in Iowa. Well, we're having it worse than ever with the younger generation—I came very near writing “Generation of Vipers.” You don't know how mother and I hate the whole set, and how nice we have to be to

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

them because father promised Unele John and Aunt Lisbeth when they died that he'd take it on himself to look after their helpless children. Mother said if he succeeded in properly taking care of his own family, he'd do fairly well. But you know how it always was with him ; he's always willing to help anybody, the poorer they are the better, and then he'll save at home and serimp and tell us how careful we ought to be not to waste a penny, and the next day go Jared Simms' security for a team of horses and lose it too, and so he's helped every one of those children and he gets no thanks for it. You ought to see and hear what airs they put on when they come to our house, because they think spiritualism is disreputable. They've all been to some high-flown church or other. Since their father and mother died, they all claim now to be Episcopalians or some such thing, because they think it looks big. Mother says they don't know any more about religion than so many monkeys. There are Lil and Frank and Nole and Ken and Val, and father will have to help every one to get a start, just as he did all the older ones ; and we don't see much prospect of getting out of it soon.

O, yes, and now we've got Aunt Tute quartered on us ; she's your sister, and mother says some pretty sharp things, because you did not take her and take care of her. But she won't stay long, that's one consolation. She's as 'fraid as death here, and every time they have a meeting, she goes off upstairs and crawls into bed and covers up, head and ears, and repeats whole pages of Pinneo's Grammar to keep from hearing what's going on below ; and then she'll have the pouts and sit around for two or three days and hardly speak to anybody. I think she's going away though pretty soon. She declares she won't stay in

SOME SEPARATIONS

this accursed country. Aunt Tute's a Quaker, and she's been telling the Quakers awful things about us, no telling just what. I wish she would go. I'm going back to school to-morrow. Write soon and tell me if you can't come.

Your affectionate nephew,
JAMES WILLOUGHBY.

At times Lyddie thought the only way possible to conquer her father-in-law's determination was by some miraculous intervention of the spirits. If William Price could fall into a trance, as Peter did when about to receive the message from Cornelius, and hear a voice bidding him, he might obey it. But William Price did not fall into trances or have spiritual visions or hear voices. That is the trouble with that kind of miracle, it only occurs to those in whom such things are not strange or wonderful; and yet Lyddie half believed and half expected it. If wishing and hoping and silent prayers could have brought it about, it would long since have happened.

This, too, made her think more and more of Enoch Willoughby and want to see him. She felt that in his presence such powers were more likely to be manifested. Spiritual natures reinforce one another. The Quaker preachers used always to have a travelling companion, who was selected for his power to reinforce the speaker

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

spiritually. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be with them." Lyddie believed this. With Enoch Willoughby, she had always felt as though the heavens were just ready to open. She longed to be with him again. There was a spiritual union greater and stronger than any kinship. With it the earth was full of life; without it, life upon the earth was meagre indeed. She was already thinking she would go to the Reserve herself, when another letter from her nephew decided her.

DEAR AUNT LYDDIE :

I am going away now for a long time. I am going off to school, and must go, and yet I feel that I am leaving the folks at home in the worst situation they have ever been in. I must tell you and urge you to go and see them. Aunt Tute has gone. She shook off the dust of her feet against our house and left it for good. Father tried to have her stay, but not she. Mother said she'd a great deal rather have Susan Ramsdell for a sister than her, but you know how mother talks. I think mother has got to be careful; she'll do something awful some day. When those spells come on her, nothing can control her; she encourages them too. You remember how she talked to the William Prices the first time they came to see us. Well she did worse than that to old Abijah Willetts. They've got him on the everlasting investigating committee. They don't know anything about his character, of course, or they would not have put him on it. So the last time they came out, mother had one of her spells, and such a raking over as she

SOME SEPARATIONS

gave old Abijah. No one could stop her; she had that wild look in her eyes; they were all afraid of her. She marched right into the room with that something about her, and walked up to Abijah and pointed her finger at him, and then she told him all that she had ever heard about him, about his stealing those horses and cheating the buyer of his farm out of the taxes. Father tried to stop her, but it was no use. She couldn't be stopped except by main force. Finally Willetts fairly broke and ran; he got up and left the room and didn't come back again. It was some time before she came out of it. I'm afraid she'll do something awful some day, and those women encourage her in it. I don't think they see the danger in it. I want you to go and see her and see if you can't try to have her control herself, and not let the spirits come on her so much.

Now, I'm afraid they're going to have trouble out there. Father has many enemies as well as many friends. Those who don't know him are nearly all his enemies, and those who do know him at all well are nearly all his friends.

He certainly is the strangest man that ever lived. Sometimes mother and I think he don't care any more for us than he does for Jared Simms' old black Betty, or for any other, the worst and poorest person on Big Stranger Creek, and then we fairly hate him. We sit together and talk about him and say things that we're ashamed of afterwards. But he likes everybody pretty much all the same, it doesn't make any difference who they are, and that's what we can't understand. Sometimes I think he's the only genuine Christian ever I knew, but it makes mother furious when I say that. But when you think how he acts, it seems like it, and when you think what he

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

says, it all seems clear, and to me it seems Christian. He don't talk much about Christ, only sometimes he'll say "Jesus said this or that," and use him as an example. He doesn't try to build up a big association with by-laws and constitutions, bath-houses and newspaper-rooms. He don't try to teach people to observe the Sabbath, or do any of those little things that commonly mean to do good. But he somehow makes every man first believe he has in himself an immortal spirit, and as soon as they believe that, they begin to change. First they seem to get a little afraid, and then they get to wanting to know more about it, and wanting strange tests to prove it. Then he tells them to sit together in small companies in quiet, and to wait on the spirit, and they may hear, or see, or feel something they don't understand that will convince them. They do it and they become convinced some way, I don't know how. Then when they want to know more, he tells them the Bible is full of it, and advises them to read and find out for themselves. He peoples the air with spirits, and with a Kingdom, and with God at the head of it. Sometimes when mother and I think how he spends his time working for other people, he seems to us more like Jesus than anybody we ever knew, and we think he is almost too good and high to be one of our family, and we fairly venerate him ; and then, as I said before, we just get to hating him, and mother declares he is bringing a whole raft of good-for-nothing men and women about the house and tracking up the floor for no manner of any good, and sometimes I believe in him and sometimes I don't. But one thing, he talks about things that I can understand, and not about something away off two thousand years ago, and it touches people. They come to hear him talk. I don't mean

SOME SEPARATIONS

preach ; he can't do that now any better than he used to when he was a Quaker—and that's what makes some people hate him. They say he's stirring up the people, and making them leave their old churches, and drawing them off into a new sect,—it is no use for him to deny it and say he wants people to go into the churches, to put new wine into old bottles. They won't believe it and I'm afraid something is going to happen ; if you could come down and go to the meeting, and have them go a little, I've thought maybe things would blow over. I'd like to tell you more, but if you come you'll see how it is at home. I'll not write any more about home again ; I've got to go away, and I hope you'll write to me about them before long.

Your affectionate nephew,

JAMES WILLOUGHBY.

XXXV

THE "RESERVE"

OUR scene now changes. It is night and dark, in a country part trees, part prairie. It shall be a country without true name, for what is about to be enacted there is best not too closely located. We have chosen to call it the "Reserve." Perhaps this means that reserved, held back from the brighter light of civilization and progress, are dark spots in human nature or the human heart, in which gloomy passions and uncultivated intelligence still lie brooded over by strange fancies.

In the "Reserve" were long woody valleys into which ran, deep, dark hollows and gullies from rough unserviceable hills. There were places without trees, high and rounded like the tops of billows, and on one of these stood a house. From this house a light shone out over a path leading to a road; on this road some distance away in a hollow, concealed by trees and darkness, stood a group of men on horseback. They were drawn up close together in consultation. After a time one of them dis-

THE “ RESERVE ”

mounted, and taking something in his hand, left the group and walked up the hill. Reaching the path, he turned into it and cautiously approached the house. There he stooped, thrust what he was carrying in his hand beneath the door, rose hurriedly, knocked once or twice so loud and strong that a dog in the rear of the house heard and began to bark; then turned and retreated rapidly down the path toward the road.

Just then the door of the house behind him opened; the light flashed out and disclosed him distinctly to view. The same moment he whirled rapidly from the path, reached the road at a bound and disappeared toward the hollow.

Pretty soon horses' feet were heard galloping off in the direction of Big Stranger. When the sound had died out in the distance, the man who had opened the door, turned as if about to go in; and, glancing down at his feet, discovered something lying there. He stooped and picked it up. It was a piece of paper. Then he went in and closed the door.

Within the house we should have found our old acquaintances—Enoch and Hannah, and Lyddie with her baby, at last come on the long-deferred visit. There besides was an old colored woman, large and strong, the “help” of the household; there were a hired man or two; and to-night there was a woman staying there

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

called "old Betty," come in for a few days to do extra work while Lyddie was "visiting."

The room had been quiet and peaceful; a stranger would have seen nothing unusual about it. Lyddie had the child on her lap and was fondling it. Hannah had been noticing the child and had remarked that it was more like William Olney than it was like "you."

There was something so unusual to Lyddie about the word "you" that she looked up and said; "I don't see how thee can do it, Hannah; it doesn't sound right for thee to call me by that word."

But Hannah replied that they had fallen into the way of it pretty much of late, and then Lyddie asked her as a favor to continue the old style of address while she was there.

"It won't be for very long, and surely not very difficult," she said, "and thee can't do anything to make me feel more at home than that, and thee certainly could not do aught to make me feel so much a stranger as to call me 'you.'"

So Hannah had assented, and then there had followed one of those long conversations that we all like so well when we go back to the old home, the old friends, after a long absence. How they go to the heart in some way! Lyddie had asked about so many things, little things, pieces of furniture, an old chair, and the looking-glass

THE "RESERVE"

with its black composition frame, that she had wreathed in asparagus and cat-tails years ago; and so on without end, till at last Hannah said:

"Why, Lyddie, I never supposed thee cared anything about such things, thee is so high-minded and spiritual."

They had been careful not to mention that latter word; there might be something unpleasant about it. They did not know exactly how Lyddie had made out in her new surroundings; and then, too, there was always the feeling that when once that subject was started it would go on without end, and leave no place for any other.

Hannah was very anxious to know how Lyddie did get on with William Price and the rest of the Quakers, and Lyddie was about equally anxious to know how things were running here, and whether there was anything in the difficulty that her nephew had hinted at, because of which he had been so desirous of having her come, when Lyddie thought she heard a noise.

"Is not that someone at the door?" she asked, and at once all stopped and listened. But there was no sound, and they were about to go on talking when there had come a loud, harsh rap, and immediately the footsteps were heard going away down the path.

"There," Lyddie said, "I was sure I heard someone."

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Then Enoch Willoughby went to the door and opened it, saying in a low voice :

“ It is very strange that anyone should knock and then run away.”

When he opened the door, he had stood gazing out still more surprised, for he could not understand why the visitor should have whirled off the path like that and run away down the road.

He had been about to close the door when he saw the paper.

“ Somebody has knocked and left this note, and then run away,” he said, coming back into the room. “ Let us see what the note is.”

He took it to the light, and Hannah and Lyddie got up and came near to hear it read. Enoch’s hand began to tremble so that he could with difficulty read the paper, but with an effort he controlled himself, and said : “ I hardly know, Hannah, whether I ought to let thee and Lyddie know the contents of this note or not. It is of no importance at most, but yet it is of very unpleasant import. It is another threatening letter, just such a one as that which Ted Blood sent me, thee remembers, in Iowa, which turned out so pleasantly, and eventually made us so good a friend. Let us hope that this may have as good an ending.”

Then he was about to put the letter in his pocket, when both of the women asked him what it was.

THE "RESERVE"

"Let us see it," they said; "it is not right to keep it to thyself."

Enoch, still holding the paper so that they could not see it, philosophized for a time, as he always did on every action.

"It is true the apprehension of evil is always greater than the evil itself, but this is coarse and brutal, and repugnant to every finer sense. If thee wants to see it, Hannah, be calm and control thyself and do not think much about it." Then he laid the sheet of paper on the table before them.

It was a large sheet of heavy writing-paper, near the top of which was roughly drawn with red ink a skull and cross-bones, and then in large printed letters that completely filled the page, these words, that Enoch Willoughby had rightly characterized as coarse and brutal:

"YOU DAMNED SPIRITUALIST, PREPARE TO LEAVE THIS COUNTRY."

The letter was not signed and not directed.

"Now don't be frightened," were Enoch Willoughby's first words; "remember all the time how the other letter turned out, and that this may even result better than that."

But Hannah was already crying, and Lyddie was walking up and down the room with the baby in her arms, and the distress of the whole family was very great.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

"That is the way it always is," said Enoch, in a calm, peaceful tone, as much to himself as to the two women; "a difference in thought among the spiritually minded becomes two opposing armies among those of the world, and so Christ was driven from place to place, and yet his kingdom conquered and will conquer; and when force is met by force, then the demons of hate are aroused and let loose. No; the force of the flesh must be met only by the force of the spirit."

His logic was not close, but he was already arranging his plan of defence.

"The only difficulty," he continued, "is that they do not know us, and think they are doing a righteous act in persecuting us, and driving us from the country. They are hardly to blame for it; for, when men set up only tradition and authority, they cannot understand what comes to them in a new garb."

Perhaps he would have gone on all night in reflection, if Hannah had not risen and said: "Now, Enoch, I want thee to make up thy mind at once what thee will do. Thee must either obey the letter and prepare to sell out so that they can see that thee is obeying it, or thee must prepare for a defence. For my part I am not very particular which. We have the law and everything on our side. We can send for James, and perhaps, Lyddie," she said, addressing her,

THE "RESERVE"

"thee can send for thy husband ; the hired men will do whatever we want them to do. We can barricade the house. I'm not averse to a little scrimmage ; the whole spiritualist neighborhood will be up in arms ; the Quakers themselves will be on our side. Thee saw the man. We can have detectives and track up the lot. Save the paper carefully ; it may serve some purpose in finding out these demons. What are law and order in the world for, I wonder, if not to punish just such villains as these ? It is a God-forsaken country, I acknowledge that, and I shouldn't mind leaving it at all ; but to be *driven* out ! That is not to my mind. Somebody must be punished for this. Thee must make up thy mind and quickly, too. Someone ought to be sent off to Tonganoxie this very night to get help."

But Enoch came in again with his meditations. "Who could it have been, and how could I find him ? They went away in the direction of the Big Stranger neighborhood."

"Yes," Hannah interrupted, "and I hope thee is not going to try to find them there, in that den of wolves ; the very country is wild and barbarous and the people are even worse than the country. I hope thee won't think of going over there to try to find another Ted Blood's child sick of diphtheria, and nurse thyself into his father's good graces. Such a cir-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

cumstance as that doesn't happen once in a thousand years."

"No," Enoch said; "but when it does happen it shows the goodness of human nature."

"Goodness of human fiddlesticks," cried Hannah. "If thee won't fight, thee must run. There's no other way, and Lyddie and I'll prepare for leaving to-morrow."

"Hannah," Enoch said quietly, "don't go so rapidly in thy thoughts. There are many possibilities. I would rather thee would not speak further about the matter to-night. Let us talk of something else. Let us go back to that pleasant discourse in which we were engaged when we were interrupted. We want to hear of Lyddie's spiritual experiences. I should like to learn about William Price, and there is much we might tell one another with profit."

And so he brought them back gradually away from the letter to the old subject and got them quieted down. There was no immediate danger, and pretty soon they went to bed and slept peacefully till morning.

In the morning the sun rose beautiful and bright, and it was impossible even to imagine the dark spirits and evil passions, the gloom and terror that had prevailed in and around that house the night before. If it had not been for that sheet of paper, they might have thought it only a horrid nightmare, a too-vivid dream.

THE "RESERVE"

There had been something very real about that, however.

In Hannah it awakened only righteous indignation.

"I never cared to stay in this country," she said. "I never wanted to come here ; but, if I were managing things, I should not propose to be driven out. It's just the same with the spiritualism itself. I think it very foolish for Enoch to go on preaching to everybody, but when they come to attempt to stop him by main force, then at once I want to teach it and preach it myself."

Hannah made out to say very sensible things in spite of a certain amount of animosity contained in them.

And then they spent a large part of the morning in conjectures as to who it could have been. It was no one from their immediate neighborhood, Enoch felt sure. They had come from the Big Stranger district most likely. And as for the man Enoch had seen when he opened the door, he was not able to place him at all. He had a certain resemblance to Jim Dark, but then he had about as close a resemblance to old Sam Reynolds. It is impossible to know or remember a man seen from the back by a mere flash of light and some distance away. The sound of the horses' feet had been heard going off to the West, that was, in the

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

direction of the Big Stranger district. That was the opposite direction from Tonganoxie where the Quaker settlement lay, and yet Hannah felt sure that Abijah Willetts had had something to do with it.

"It's as much on account of what I said to him as anything," she thought. But Enoch said, "It is a contest between truth and tradition."

"It is a contest between an old scoundrel who is afraid of being found out and the people who know his meanness!" cried Hannah.

In this she may have been right. Abijah might have had something to do with it, but it was also true that there was an intense hatred against spiritualists among others than rascals. It was not quite so intense as that which the Puritans had for witches possibly, but it was not far from it. Within the range of Enoch Willoughby's acquaintance, he was in no danger; he was so excellent a man that he might believe what he pleased; people said little about it. They paid little attention to his belief or his teaching, excusing it in him as an eccentricity. Outside the range of his personal acquaintance or influence, however, people said harsh things about him. They said that nest of spiritualists ought to be torn up and scattered; they said it would injure the reputation of the country, which was bad enough already, and prevent new settlers coming in. The most

THE "RESERVE"

narrow and prejudiced religious bigotry is found generally in country places, out-of-the-way districts, where men associate but little, and where, if there are thoughts, they grow up like solitary weeds, stiff, rank, and vigorous. No religious zealot will have his origin in society ; it will require the solitude of the cloister, the woods, or the desert to produce him.

In the Big Stranger district there were people low and vile enough to white-cap a man for religious belief. We may be sure Abijah Willetts was too shrewd a man to be an actual leader in such a thing. He was altogether a modern rascal, and it would be impossible to find any cloven hoofs or dragon's tail about him. He would adhere closely to the letter of the law and always be safe. If he dropped a suggestion of any kind, it would never be such a one as could be brought up against him. He might say in the hearing of a man like Brode Stevens, when talking about that "nest of spiritualists," that "it was a pity there are certain offences the law cannot reach," and so have indirectly helped on the event. But it will perhaps never be known exactly how it did come about that the organization, already in existence a long time for other purposes, took up the case of the spiritualists, and decided to act upon it, and finally sent the notice as we have seen.

XXVI

A DAY ON BIG STRANGER.

Now Hannah and Lyddie took an entirely different course in this matter from that which Enoch advised. He wanted them to say nothing : it would only excite harsh feelings, he said, and do more harm than good, stir up the neighborhood and set one settlement against another.

But say what he would, Hannah and Lyddie that day sent off word to various people, while Enoch was thinking of ways by which he might solve the difficulty. It was not only that, but he wanted to find the best opportunity to propagate his doctrine and to do good. When minds are stirred up and excited, when there is something going on of weight and importance, then is the time they can best be caught and held and instructed, he argued.

Along about ten o'clock he took his hat and coat and prepared to go out. Hannah asked him where he was going, but he avoided a direct answer. He told her he was going to walk out among the neighbors a little and see if he might not hear something ; but as soon as he got away from the house, he took his course directly for

A DAY ON BIG STRANGER

the Big Stranger district. He could not help it, or thought he could not. He walked rapidly until he finally came in among those clay hills that ran down into the Big Stranger bottoms. What a wild, rough country it was; the lowlands full of tall sycamore trees with little patches of clearing cut out here and there, and small houses built at the edges of the cornfields.

"The people are poor," he thought, "and must live wretched lives. What can they have to think about here from day to day, from season to season, from year to year? If they can keep body and soul together they do well. And yet these are the very people, and these are the very places from which great truths arise and take their start like cyclones across the great continent of life." He was so busy with the various thoughts that arose in his mind at the sight of this new and poor neighborhood that he almost forgot the object on which he had come.

It was recalled to him by his approaching one of the little houses. When he went up to the door and knocked, two large fox-hounds came from back of the house, but did not offer to molest him. A man opened the door and Enoch Willoughby went in and sat down.

Now it was that he did what I consider an extraordinary thing, and yet just in keeping with the man's whole character. He told the

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

whole story of his spiritualism calmly and deliberately, from the time of his early life up to the present. He told of the letter; said he had no idea from whom it came, but that he had no intention of going away and leaving the country; that he felt the senders of it did not know him, and had misjudged him, and all that they needed was to become better acquainted with him; that he wanted to meet and talk with them, and that as they kept themselves in concealment, there was no other way but to become acquainted with the whole neighborhood from whom he supposed the letter had originated. His great desire was to meet these people together. He wanted to argue with them and converse with them. He wished they would allow him to meet with them that night, and talk with them. He could not ask this man if he belonged to the organization, nor could he ask him to send him to one who did, but he could and did ask to be directed to his next neighbor. And after sitting and talking awhile he received such direction and went away.

In this manner he spent the day going about from house to house in the Big Stranger district without losing a touch of that dignity that naturally belonged to him when he was himself, and in each case leaving the impression of a gentle voice, a kindly eye, and a fatherly face, which it was very difficult for these people to

A DAY ON BIG STRANGER

connect with that person in their imaginations to whom they had given the opprobrious name of "that old spiritualist."

For Enoch Willoughby that was a day never to be forgotten. He must have visited some eight or ten houses. At one place he had had his dinner, at another his supper, at neither would the people accept any pay. But at no place did he hear a word about any whitecap organization, or about anyone who belonged to such a thing.

He had thought all the time, "It is not likely that they will invite me to meet them, but what I have done will do good. The evil in the world is mostly imaginary and the way to overcome it is by a close acquaintance with the truth."

It had already grown dark. He was thinking as he walked along what Hannah and Lyddie would say to his all-day's absence from home, and he was not by any means home yet, for he had but just passed the house that he first came to in the morning.

He had barely passed it indeed when suddenly a man with his face masked appeared in the road before him.

"Come with me, old man," the stranger said, "if you are in earnest about wanting to meet the people who sent you that letter," and he turned and led the way back to that first house. "You will find no one here except the men of

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

the organization ; the family that lives here which you saw in the morning are away from home."

When they reached the house and went in, there were as many as a dozen men seated around the room, all with their faces concealed. They had no masks, properly speaking, they had only a piece of white linen or cotton cloth stretched over their faces, with openings for the eyes and mouth. They kept their hats on their heads and remained seated.

Now it was that Enoch Willoughby found himself in the hands of a superior power. He was not a preacher, never had been ; his own reasoning was the best he could do at that, and on his own reasoning also he had very little reliance. But he had, and had always possessed, what he felt was a singular and wonderful power. He determined to rely upon it now ; indeed that was the very basis of his whole theory. These men could not be convinced by argument, he thought, and perhaps not convinced at all, but for once he determined to trust himself and his own life to the power in which he professed belief.

"I am," he said aloud to them, "as you have called me, a spiritualist. That is I believe in the existence about us of a world of disembodied spirits of men and women who are intelligences, alive as much now as when they inhabited this body. I purpose first to show you that this is

A DAY ON BIG STRANGER

true, and then, after you believe that, I intend to show you how this knowledge will lead you to make better men of yourselves, and make the world and everything in it better. I do not know you, not one of you. I am in a country where I have never been before. You may not believe this, but not one of you will say that he has ever seen me here before to-day. I have never to my knowledge met one of you without his face masked. I am going then to put myself in the power of that spiritual world in which I have belief. I am going to ask those spirits that surround you and me to tell me the name of each man here present, and as much of his history as they may think it best to give. If when I have gone a little way in this, any one does not care to have me go further, he will feel at liberty to retire. After I begin I shall not be responsible for what I say until I am through. If I trust myself at all to the power that is about me, I must do so wholly. Perhaps even now there are some of you who would prefer that I should not go on."

Some persons were heard to say "Go on."
A good many remained silent.

Enoch arose. He stood for a moment and bowed his head; a slight tremor passed over him.

"We cannot command the heavens," he began; "we can only say what is given us to say

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

and that may be imperfectly spoken and imperfectly understood."

Then walking directly in front of the man who had met him and brought him back, he stopped and said :

"Niles Joseph, do you not remember we went swimming one Fourth of July in the old swimming hole, and in diving you struck your nose on a stone in the bottom, and your nose bears a scar from it on the left side to this day? Have I spoken the truth?"

For some time the man did not reply. Then he said slowly and distinctly: "It is the truth."

"Is your name Niles Joseph?" Enoch Willoughby asked.

"It is," the man replied. "But who are you that say you went swimming with me?"

For a moment they waited. Then Enoch Willoughby replied: "It is the spirit of your cousin, John Clemmons, who died two years after that time, hurt by a limb falling from a black oak-tree. Is this correct?" And again the man acknowledged that it was so.

So Enoch passed around the room, on the way giving the name of each man and in each case some incident, and in almost every case name and incident were acknowledged as correct.

Not in every case, however, for we are not advocating a doctrine; we are simply describing the man. When he had passed about half way

A DAY ON BIG STRANGER

around the room, two men, seated near the door, got up and went out before he came to them. As they did so, some one remarked, "They are afraid ; they have too many secrets in their past to care to have it exposed to the daylight."

At this Enoch Willoughby stopped.

"I do not wish to go further," he said, "and tax to its utmost the powers of the invisible world. What has been given to me to-day to do, I might never be able to do again, for I have not done it of myself ; it has been given me to do. At another time when you have removed your masks and at another place when I can tell you the meaning of these things, I should like to meet with you again. I must return now. I should like to have you come and converse with me."

Then he turned and went out of the room, unmolested, without further incident, and so home.

If any one can explain this thing, he can do more than I can. If any one requires that the writer prove the possibility of its happening by bringing forward another man who can do the same things over and over, the writer must acknowledge his inability to satisfy the request. There might not be another man in the world who could have done it. For us it is but an incident in a story, and we may believe it or let it alone.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

Enoch knew too much of the scriptures not to know that Jesus had deprecated this use of the spirits. He only felt ashamed that he had employed them for what might be considered his own advantage, and not solely for the advancement of a doctrine. But in spite of that there came the great sense of power, of a great and wonderful world about him that was assisting him and upholding him. It may have been telepathy, or mind reading, or a lucky accident, or a fortunate guess or two, or whatever other explanation; the fact remained that Enoch Willoughby believed it to be a touch of the spiritual world, a gift of power made to him in his difficulty. He was elated over it as one might be over the discovery of a new continent. In his depth of gratitude, he said over and over he would never doubt again, he would never require another test, he would never again hunt after signs, or miracles, or omens; come what might, he would go on henceforth strong and believing to the end. Then he hastened his steps in order the sooner to reach home and recount the wonderful experience.

There he did not find the same ready belief he had hoped for.

"It was all guess work," was Hannah's first remark. "Don't tell me," she said, "that any one can do such things as that. It was a foolhardy act, and rash and unheard of." Enoch had

A DAY ON BIG STRANGER

thrust his head into the lion's den, and this time, wonderfully enough, come out safely, but let him not imagine he'd heard the last of it. He had whetted the appetite of these people for tests, and made them think they could be given to any extent. "They'll be about now soon for more, and then more and more" she said; "there is no end to this thing when it is once begun." Ah, there is where the trouble would come in.

But Enoch's serenity could not be disturbed by Hannah's fears. He was certainly in the arms of a great knowledge; it would no longer do to call it hope. He was sure, certain, fixed, unchangeable, henceforth and forever.

Lyddie doubted just a little. Enoch had been around among these people all that day. Who knows what he might have heard, what impressions might have been made on his subconsciousness. Hannah felt too that because Enoch could not become a speaker, he was the more proud of his tests, and had all his life been looking for them and so had magnified them in this case.

But they were both glad that he had come out of it safely, and they hoped that now the matter would end.

It was, however, only beginning, and to understand its continuation, we must go back to the room where Enoch Willoughby left the whitecappers.

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

The mystical mystifies, but never satisfies, and these men were not satisfied. After Enoch Willoughby had gone, they discussed the matter with a constantly increasing distrust in the miraculous nature of the performance, and a growing fear lest they had been tricked. They began to think the fact that Enoch Willoughby had been about the neighborhood all day suspicious. They had nearly all seen him. He had heard some of their names probably. They wore the same clothes that they had worn when he saw them, and their clothes were not covered by masks as their faces were. It was hardly listened to, when one person said that Enoch Willoughby had not even noticed their clothing, but was altogether like one in a dream while he was telling their names and those other circumstances. Besides not all of the names were correct, and the circumstances had some few points about them that were uncertain. Niles Joseph said he did not strike his nose on a stone at the bottom of the swimming hole, but on one that stuck out from the rocks that formed the bank.

They had certainly been cheated. One man out of the ten or twelve was convinced, and would take no further part in the proceedings; and have nothing further to do with harming Enoch Willoughby. Enoch had told him the truth, a truth no one else could possibly have known. He would not take the risk of

A DAY ON BIG STRANGER

making a world of spirits angry, and he then and there withdrew from the organization. He was, however, only one man. In the others the excitement went on increasing, and the feeling becoming more intense. Why had Enoch Willoughby stopped when he did in going the rounds of the circle of men?

Probably because he had just come to some he knew nothing about. And yet those men were the very ones who had peculiar experiences in their lives that might have made good tests.

“What if he had told you what happened at the cross roads at the time of that insurance business?”

The person addressed made no reply, but put his hand back to his hip pocket significantly. One can see what kind of danger Enoch Willoughby had been in. Instead of freeing himself from it, as he thought, he had in reality increased it many fold; for, before the men left the place where they had met with Enoch Willoughby, they had decided to send him another threatening letter; more violent, and one determining the penalty of disobedience and fixing the date on which he should be compelled to leave the neighborhood.

XXVII

THE INCIDENT OF THE CHILD

THE next day after this event, the Willoughbys were expecting something to happen. They did not know what it would be, but that there would be something they felt sure.

There was a kind of nervous excitement about the whole place, which Enoch and Lyddie were calm enough to control, but which had had a bad effect on Hannah; she was all day like one beside herself, hardly daring to speak, because she would say things that she immediately repented of, and yet unable to keep back the thoughts that surged in her mind, or the words that bubbled forth from her lips.

They were thoughts that it would not do to express, harsh thoughts about religion in general, and christianity in particular; about all dreamers and fanatics and religionists of every kind, the foolishness of martyrdom, the danger of fixed opinions, the necessity of fighting. Enoch had all his life preached non-resistance, a most absurd and ridiculous opinion, she thought. It was no use for Enoch to call up the action of Jesus as a model in this respect.

THE INCIDENT OF THE CHILD

"I should think more of him," Hannah said, "if he had boldly put himself at the head of a band of those old Jews, and gone to work and slashed into those detestable Pharisees and materialistic Romans, and made a kingdom for himself on the earth that meant something."

"Yes, and how long would it have lasted?" was Enoch's answer. "It would never have been heard of after a dozen years, and who would there ever have been to point the way to the great hope of mankind?"

But even the most soothing, calm words that Enoch could speak would only start her going again. They all saw it was best to say nothing to her. There was that singular look about her eyes all day. She said it was the spirit. There was just a suspicion in the minds of Enoch and Lyddie that it was to be feared, that it bordered on something else. We do not like to speak the word, as Enoch and Lyddie did not like to speak it.

Hannah had cultivated these spells ever since she had given herself up to the new doctrine. It had begun when she was still a Quaker and had spoken in meeting. There was a power about her that had lifted her out of herself, which she said was spiritual influence. Enoch had generally thought she did it herself, because it had been so difficult for him to speak, and for Hannah it had been so easy that he thought

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

there was nothing *in* her speaking. But now he began to recall the various times she had been led out of herself to act like one mad with the fury of words. He noticed, too, there was a singular look about her eyes at times, and very strong to-day. He believed, too, it might be spirits, but it might also be—something else. They had better be careful. It would have been better if he had not shown this letter and had kept Hannah and Lyddie entirely out of all knowledge of this matter, but it was done now, and they would have to take the consequences.

All day long they watched the roads, Hannah especially, for they expected some one to come; if not some one with another threat, then some one wanting more tests, for it had generally been the case that when *one* remarkable thing was done, like those tests Enoch had given in the Big Stranger district, a great demand would come for more. And so this day passed with that constant strain upon all concerned.

That night they received the second letter, not so coarse and brutal as the first, but much more to be feared.

And now if we can only tell slowly and calmly what happened, we shall do well. It was impossible to keep the knowledge of the second letter from Hannah, and it was during this day that she did that dreadful thing that brought the shock that eventually cured her. She threw

THE INCIDENT OF THE CHILD

the child into the well. The tale has been told over and over and is known to at least one whole community. To many it did not seem strange, for they said that Hannah was not in her right mind. Those Quaker women especially who came to visit her when they thought she was going to die, and before whom she had sprung from her bed and spoken as a raging bacchante, said it was no wonder, that they had seen she was beside herself. Abijah Willetts, too, who had had some experience with Hannah's passion, said he was not surprised at anything the woman might do. As for Hannah herself, her passion gone, her "influence" departed, her bacchantic fury subsided, she had been overwhelmed with a flood of repentance.

"Oh, Lyddie, Lyddie," she had said over and over again, "*I did not do it; believe me, I did not do it. It was an evil influence, an evil spirit, come upon me. It was not myself, and I was not myself when I did it; how could it have been me that did it?*" And then she fondled the child—for the child had been easily rescued—and great tears rolled down her face.

"O, Lyddie, I will never forgive myself. If anything had happened and the child had died—O, I had rather a thousand times it had been myself." She declared over and over she would never have anything more to do with the "influence."

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

Enoch maintained the same attitude.

"Fie, Hannah," he said, "thy reasoning is not at all correct. Because one spirit is bad is no reason that all are so. We must *try* the spirits; hold fast to that which is good. Do not condemn the whole matter because some thing about it is bad."

But Hannah had reached a determination; her conscience was aroused. She saw that for her it was better to avoid excitement. She put the matter of the threat and its consequences calmly from her mind. She was very solicitous about Lyddie, who had been wet through and through in getting the child from the well, and who just at that time had need to take care of herself physically.

"Enoch has got himself into this trouble," Hannah said; "and I think he will have to get himself out."

But oh! the horror of Lyddie's mind when she saw the danger her child had been in, and thought of what might have happened. Was it all insanity? She thought back over her whole early life, those first years when she was a young girl, almost a woman; she remembered those spiritual meetings at the Willoughbys, and Enoch's dreams and visions and how Hannah used to shudder with fear, and she herself had been the one to think there was good in them. She remembered that time in the plum

THE INCIDENT OF THE CHILD

thicket when she had been seized in religious frenzy, and made to do strange things. She remembered the second time William Price came to the house, and she had again been seized and carried away beyond herself. She remembered the various times she had been under an influence that was not of herself; and Lyddie came to the conclusion that God is in everything, but not everything is God. He could use even a touch of insanity, than which there is no more startling thing in the world, to arouse mankind for their good; and a great sigh of relief at having escaped something terrible passed from her lips. If she only got safely home, got back with the child to her home and to William Price. Ah! could it be that he was right after all—that they were all crazy?

Though she could not help feeling that he was narrow and prejudiced, she liked the sweet sanity of his earthliness. Dear, good, William Price, would it be possible that he should ever use those terms when speaking of her? And then immediately she thought how strange a person she herself was; when she was among people who talked of and cared for the things of the world, she soon conceived a dislike for them and called them shallow and materialistic, and felt as though she were bound in a prison of flesh, and longed to burst her prison and fly away; and then when she came among dream-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

ers and spiritually minded people, she pretty soon began to think them fools to their own senses, deceived by their own thoughts, caught up and whirled off in a storm of their own mad fancies! She was now in this latter extreme. She wanted to go back, oh, how she wanted to go home! She would give more to-day to talk of the tongs by her own fireplace than of all the religions in the world. Oh, if her husband were only here.

She lay on the bed with the child beside her, and tears trickled down her cheeks, while Hannah sat and looked at her.

"Don't cry, Lyddie," said Hannah; "I never did it; O Lyddie, tell me that I did not do it."

"I am certain it was not thee, Hannah," Lyddie said; "thee never could have had the heart to do it. It was some evil spirit that came over thee."

Then Hannah went on to tell how it was.

"I had felt them about me all day," she said; "strange thoughts and strange fancies. They seemed to come like vivid pictures. I could hear voices and see actions that were only within my inner mind, and suddenly the things of the real world all became dim and indistinct. As in a dream or vision, I saw myself, and immediately everything else disappeared from before me. I watched myself with a horrid fascination. I saw myself approach the child's

THE INCIDENT OF THE CHILD

cradle ; I saw myself bend over the sleeping infant ; I saw my own lips move and heard them utter words as distinct and clear as if they had been printed openly upon the lips of a picture. They were ‘Little Quaker, little Quaker,’ and I could hear the tone of my own voice as I spoke them. Then that phantom, *me*, picked the child up gently and calmly ; it turned, it glanced around to see if any one were near ; it thought to lay the child back, but there was no cradle before it ; the door was open and there stood the well outside. The phantom smiled. It was a nice idea. It advanced toward the door, and then came the shriek that aroused me from my evil vision to find, O horrible ! that I had all through been following the actions of a phantom, myself a blind, unreasoning imitator. But luckily it turned out without injury, and perhaps it will be for our good.”

XXVIII

THE MIRACLE

BUT Hannah was not yet through with the spirit. It had still a purpose to perform. It was not easy for one who once yielded to its influence to withdraw suddenly from it. Whatever it was, the habit was only slowly acquired and slowly discontinued. We are believers in the existence of this power of the spirit as Enoch Willoughby was, but by no means do we believe, nor did Enoch Willoughby, that it was always good. That there is something in it, is as sure as that the sun will shine to-morrow, and when people have once felt it, they will believe in its existence forever. They may believe it with fear and avoid it, or they may believe it with love and reverence it. Its influence gives to man a second nature, and when of the right kind it is, we believe, the greatest power on earth to uphold the sinking spirit, to lead men out of what is low and degrading into the broad light of truth and purity. We believe it to be the basis of Christianity, perhaps of all religion. We do not know what it is, and do not pretend to know, and that is where we think Enoch

THE MIRACLE

Willoughby's mistake came in. He thought that he knew what it was, and his explanation was perhaps as reasonable as any, but hardly more reasonable than some others. However this might be, one could hardly expect a body of men of the mental calibre of those inhabitants of Big Stranger to be able to follow the subtle reasoning of Gamaliel and let Enoch Willoughby alone, saying if what he had in him was of evil, it would come to naught; if it was of God, it would prevail and they ought not then to be fighting against God. That would have been the reasoning of Shubal Swain. Now let us see how the whitecappers reasoned.

The first effect upon them had been to bring doubt and confusion. That one of their number had left them and declared he would not take further part was a serious matter. The second letter had been sent rather hastily and by some with reluctance. There had been something wonderfully mysterious about what Enoch Willoughby had done. Some of them were undoubtedly afraid of him. It was noticed that the two men who had gotten up and gone out as Enoch Willoughby approached them in his test-giving, were now urging on the whipping. Some said these two men were afraid of him, and—they said it under their breath—had good reason to be. A kind of faction arose among them, a good deal of dispute and rough

ENOCII WILLOUGHBY

joking. Those who had incidents named from their lives had the worst of it, and naturally enough did not like it. Why did not the man go on and go the rounds of the company; what was fair for one was fair for all? Then he might have told them something that was actually worth believing.

At any rate, the result of these deliberations was that they decided to go to the house again and call the man out. They would inform him they were not satisfied and order him to go the rounds of the company and tell the name of each masked man and an incident from his life. If he did this, they would let him off; if he did not, he should be whipped or driven out of the community. Even those whose sympathies had been aroused for him assented to this plan, for they had no idea but if he could tell one mysterious thing, he could tell another; and, if under one condition, why not under any; and those who had no sympathy for him thought he had been merely tricking them and this would enable them to catch him and the man should be punished for it.

Thus it was that they came again and called Enoch Willoughby out of the house and no one within noticed it. It is not to be wondered at if Lyddie kept careful watch over the child and did not let it out of her sight; and Hannah was so occupied in thinking of the awful thing she

THE MIRACLE

had done, and what it might have resulted in, that she did not notice that Enoch had been called out. Besides the time had not been fixed for this evening in the letter.

Outside Enoch Willoughby was led to a certain place by the same group of masked men that he had met in the Big Stranger district ; at any rate he supposed they were the same.

They put to him the proposition they had arrived at.

“Go the rounds of us,” the spokesman said ; “tell the name and an incident from the life of each man ; and, if you hit it as well as you did before, we’ll let you off ; if you don’t hit it, we’ll let things go as you received notice in the letter ; that is, we’ll give you time to get out of the country.”

Enoch Willoughby had not yet spoken. He stood there before the group silently. He imposed a little of his own dignity upon them. His utter absence of fear in this dangerous situation, his absorption in his own thoughts, than which there is nothing that carries greater respect, the fact that this man in a certain way claimed connection with an invisible world, and had apparently given proof of the connection—all these things had their effect upon the group of men. It was night and had become dark, but the men had with them a number of lanterns ; these they set down together, and they formed a little

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

bunch of light on the ground around which the men were gathered ; and by which everything could, even from a distance, be plainly seen.

Enoch Willoughby had not yet spoken. Finally he asked : " What will be the penalty if I do not speak at all ? "

" Do you mean to refuse ? " the spokesman asked.

" I should prefer, " Enoch Willoughby replied calmly, " not to put it in that form. I would rather say, ' if I cannot answer. ' "

" What do you mean, ' if you cannot answer ' ? "

" If you will have a few moments' patience, I will attempt to explain to you what I mean. "

" Well, be quick about it, old man, " said the spokesman brutally.

But Enoch was entirely unmoved by it one way or the other and slowly and calmly began :

" It is given to no one to *command* the invisible world. "

" What's that you're giving us, " some one interrupted. But Enoch did not notice the interruption.

" And whatever is done *through* it, must be done *by* it. Before now it has happened that great things have come to men, and they have then thought they possessed power to command the elements, that they possessed the key to all mysterious knowledge, only to find that what

THE MIRACLE

had come to them had been *given* to them, that they knew little, and had no power over what they did know. What I told you before, *I* did not tell you, but some one else told you *through* me. If I should say, I can tell you your names and your past lives now, it would be false. I can tell you nothing, and yet, it may be, that I can tell you everything you ask."

But the men were growing impatient.

"What is that you are telling us," they said; "you can and you can't; you will, and you won't; you told us, and you didn't." They thought he was trying to deceive them. "Will you do what we ask, or will you not?"

"I will do what is given me to do, and further than that I can say or do nothing," Enoch calmly replied, and then stood waiting. He had bowed his head, and was silent. The effect of his appearance and presence was like that of one praying.

In fact he was praying. He was saying to himself, "why should '*they*' not go on, and complete the circle of tests? And yet, no one can know why. There may be that in the lives of those men which would make it dangerous for me and dangerous for them if it were exposed. With what depth of insight the Saviour added to his prayer, 'Thy will be done?'"

And then again he attempted to explain. "Every act of your lives," he said, "is known."

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

"Tell it to us, then," they said, for they thought he meant known to him.

"And no doubt could be told to you," he went on, not noticing the interruption.

"Then tell it, tell it!" they cried; "don't be afraid of the worst that you know."

"But the power in which I believe," he continued in the same unmoved manner, "and the intelligence in which I trust is all knowing and all seeing; and besides that, it is all loving; it cares for you as well as for me; it is like a father of many children, who sees one in danger, but knows if he rescues the one, he will endanger the many, and so chooses the best, which may seem to the one child the worst, act. I can tell you nothing. I can promise nothing. I have asked that it might be given me to speak as you wish, but it has not been given. I put my trust in that as the best answer, and I shall no longer attempt to say or do anything. I am in your power. Do with me as you please; but I tell you if you attempt to harm me, you will grieve a world of spirits about you, who care for you as father or mother, brother or sister, who are higher than you, and better than you, and know everything you say or do, or even think, and will remember it."

Then they seized him, for they hardly heard a word of all he had been saying, and had grown very impatient at it, and proceeded to take off his coat and lay bare his back.

THE MIRACLE

“You need an argument, old man, that some one can understand !”

Now it was that Enoch Willoughby was in danger of real martyrdom. It seemed as if there was no way to save him ; the men were aroused, angry. There was no one about the place to whom he could look for help. And yet the indignity was prevented ;—not in any such miraculous way as Enoch Willoughby was perhaps half expecting, but in a way that was really almost as miraculous.

Some little time after Enoch had been called out of the house, Hannah had missed him, and had said to Lyddie, “Where in the world can Enoch have gone this time of night and why can he be staying away so long.”

She saw he was not in the house, and began to get frightened. The whole subject of that threatening letter came back to her mind and she was becoming very greatly aroused, when she chanced to see a light through the window. She went to the window and looked out. She saw clearly the group of masked men, standing around the lanterns ; she saw Enoch at one side ; she could perceive that they were talking ; and she knew what it was about. Her quick imagination was ready enough to give her the whole subject, even the words and tones of their conversation.

That “something” began to arise in Hannah,

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

that had already done awful things. The "power" was coming back on her. She could feel it about her eyes and in her breast. She was almost ready to shout aloud. She had said it should never come upon her again; but she knew when she said this she was not master over it to call it or keep it away.

Suddenly she saw them lay hold upon him. Then it was to her as if the powers of heaven had been let loose upon her, as if a flood had enveloped her. She gave one cry, that quick, sharp cry that is part shriek, part laughter; but, whatever composed of, is awful, terrible; and then she opened the door, and walked out. There is something fearful in insanity, and this religious frenzy had much the same effect. When Hannah came walking up to these men, under this power as she was, they saw it. She was talking a strange language, intermingled with those singular shouts that always remind one in their effect, of the bellow of a creature that has scented blood and at whose call the herd of kine rush up, pawing the earth, bawling, furious.

Without an intelligible word, she walked into the crowd of men, who gave way before her strange and unearthly appearance, fascinated by the sight; and, before they were aware what she was going to do or say, she had seized the cloth mask of the nearest man, torn it from his face, and tossed it upon the ground.

THE MIRACLE

Then she proceeded to speak.

It was not so much, perhaps, what she said that affected them, for half the time one could not understand a word of her strange babble, but it was the frenzy of her voice, the strange light in her eyes. Hannah, undoubtedly, had that something about her that people have long tried in vain to explain. She had another self, another personality that came over her with great power. She said it was a spirit. We know it came near being the death of her little nephew, and so it could hardly have been all good; and yet at this time, it as effectually stopped the proceedings against Enoch Willoughby as it had driven Abijah Willetts out of the house like a whipped cur that time he had come with the committee.

“Now go on your way,” she shouted at last, her speech becoming intelligible “or I will tear the hypocritical masks from every one of your cowardly faces. And as for thee, Enoch, get up, and come to the house. I should like to see any one so much as make a motion to touch thee!”

She walked across to where he stood.

“Put thy coat on, or thee’ll take cold!”

That was finally what she said, and these common-place words were powerful as though they had been shrieks and cries of terror, for the spirit spoke through every one of them, and thrilled the hearer to the back-bone.

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

Thus the miracle of leading Enoch Willoughby away without hinderance from among those men was performed, and that was the last that was ever heard of any whitecapping attempts by them.

They were cowed and driven away, not so much by the fact of a woman speaking to them as by the fact that there was something strange in Hannah's speaking. They saw something in her that was more than ordinary, more than natural; and there are thousands and even hundreds of thousands of men to this day who have seen the same thing in women and in men too, who hesitate to call it insanity, and who satisfy themselves for a name by saying simply, "There is something in it." So these men said, "there is something in it." Some of them had been convinced by Enoch's tests and some of them by Hannah's "influence." In some way they felt rebuked and shamed; they had really no cause against the family; their party was already divided, and they gave the matter up entirely. Indeed Big Stranger district eventually became one of the greatest spiritualist neighborhoods in that region.

But now we must consider what became of Hannah when she returned to the house. It was a long time before the "influence" left her, so long, in fact, that Enoch and Lyddie began to be afraid that she would never come out of

THE MIRACLE

it. It was very late at night before she went to sleep, and she was not herself all that time, and continued talking in broken utterances with little or no meaning. Lyddie and Enoch thought she would sleep it off, but for a long time it seemed as if she would not go to sleep.

Along toward morning, however, she fell into slumber, and from that on she lay as though she would not waken again, and slept till long past noon of the next day. When she awoke, she was herself, and when they told her of what she had done, she herself knew most of it, for the original self had not become entirely unconscious, but she began to be more and more afraid of the "influence." They told her how long she had continued the strange unintelligible talking after she came into the house. She began to think, "what if it should never leave me," and again and again she thought of Lyddie's child. One must not play with fire, and there seemed to her to be something more dangerous than fire in this awful thing.

Never after that night did Enoch tell her "she did it herself," and she saw, as he told her, that it was better the inspiration should always have before itself the example of a good and gentle character so that one might not be led astray by the sudden caprice of an irresponsible fancy to do harmful acts. They had little fear of any-

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

thing further taking place from the Big Stranger district. The way had been opened for a religious discussion that went to the bottom of things, and Lyddie completed her visit in peace, and enjoyed it.

But she knew that for these people religion was something different from what it was to most. They had worked out a kind of primitive religion for themselves. It had little of tradition about it, almost nothing of authority. She knew they would abide by it always, and she felt that for them it was hardly worth while that they should continue the pretence of remaining with the old church. She felt that Enoch Willoughby was of the material of which martyrs are made. But there are worse martyrdoms than whippings, or even tortures at the stake; the martyrdom of accepted unpopularity, of separation from church and friends, the martyrdom of family depreciation, if not even hatred, the martyrdom of gradual retirement into self through the contact with misapplied coolness. She saw all these in store for Enoch Willoughby, and that they were inevitable for him since his spirituality was of that Pauline kind, distinct, clear, vivid, never to be forgotten, or even mistaken. And Hannah, too, must suffer the same kind of martyrdom, because she was a follower of his. If it had not been for that, her religious frenzy would have suited one church as well as another. Lyd-

THE MIRACLE

die looked over the prospects for their future in this new country, and she thought she saw more hope for their happiness and their usefulness if they broke with the old, and went zealously to work to build up the new, and she advised them to do this. Lyddie's opinions and advice had come to have great weight.

"As for myself," she told them, "I shall remain as I have always been. I shall go with my husband's church and remain there, but I shall always have sympathy for you, and you must never forget that I am still with the church from which you have broken away, and we can make a few concessions as you can make a few. Thee, Hannah, need not call us all 'bigoted Christians' any more than we need say you are all 'sorcerers and necromancers.'"

Then William Olney came down and finished his visit, and took Lyddie back with him, and life went on with the two families in much the same way. Old William Price was never reconciled with his daughter-in-law. I verily believe if he had been on his death-bed, and she had importuned him for a friendly look, with the strength of his last breath he would have turned away his head from her. Even that little house in Hesper and the small farm near the village, he made over to his daughter also before he died, although his daughter had not seen him for years, had not helped him in any way, or in

ENOCK WILLOUGHBY

any way been like a daughter to him. It remained the one great disappointment of Lyddie's life that the old gentleman could not have been reconciled, but such is life; we cannot help it, and cannot make men over again.

XXIX

CONCLUSION

THE trouble in the Big Stranger district, just as before in Iowa, led to a great extension of the doctrine. Opposition is almost the only nourishment required for the growth of a new teaching. We are inclined to believe that the only thing that prevented Enoch Willoughby from becoming a new prophet and founder of a religion, a Mahomet or Brigham Young, was lack of sufficient opposition. If the threats against him had been carried out, and he had been actually beaten to death without flinching or recantation—as might easily have been the case—if things had gone a little further, he would have stood a fair chance of becoming famous and possibly immortal. As it was, his following increased, the spiritual meetings became more and more largely attended. And all this time that investigating committee had been hanging fire, if one might be allowed this expression. And why not? A heresy trial may be pathetic, but in these days it can hardly be tragical; and they none of them go off like a court-martial, but seem to drag their weary

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

length through whole volumes of proceedings. This one was now, however, soon to come to an end. In some way or other the Quakers heard of that old performance of Enoch Willoughby's years ago, when he thought and said he had been "influenced" by the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. Of course, consistently with his belief, he did not mean merely that he had taken the teachings of Jesus as a guide, or any such modern or common-sense interpretation of the words as that, he meant just what he said; and, though he would gladly have kept it quiet, for he revered truly in his way, I honestly believe, the name and character of Jesus, and felt in a certain manner the incongruity, if that is the word to express his feeling, of such influence; that is, he was really humble, and felt and knew the disparity between the man and the spirit in this case, yet when it was done, and came out, and became known, and the Quakers brought it up against him and made it one of the charges, then came up that whole feeling of opposition again.

As mildly as possible he put it to the committee: "Why, the Apostle Paul said the same thing—not in any way to compare myself and my experiences to the Apostle Paul and to his wonderful insight and experiences—but thee must remember he even attributed so little a thing as his being turned aside from going into

CONCLUSION

Mysia to an intimation from the spirit of Jesus." Then he referred them to Acts xvii., but you cannot put a thing like that in mild enough language to prevent giving offence.

"The old, blaspheming wretch," they thought, "does he think the spirit of Jesus has nothing better to do than to come about influencing *him*?" People shuddered when they heard it. Of course, when Paul's name is connected with such a circumstance it is different, for we hear the sound through an intervening wall of tradition, history, poetry, and it is so deadened, and we are so deafened at most, that we only half catch the meaning. And so they urged that he be turned out of the meeting, but many of them were still kindly disposed to him on account of his good character, and thought it would be better for him to resign and withdraw voluntarily.

That was also Hannah's opinion, but Enoch Willoughby said, "No, their action shall stand as a testimony against them," and he went on arguing and quoting Scripture until they became tired of it, and we might say tired out, when they formally expelled him and erased his name from the book of church membership; and the day on which that occurred Enoch Willoughby looked back upon with a kind of sad pride, and immediately after it became better friends than ever with all the old Quakers of the

ENOCH WILLOUGHBY

neighborhood and tried now more industriously than ever to convert them to spiritualism. They lost much of the harsh feeling against him as soon as he was out of the church, for there is nothing like standing squarely on an open platform of opinion.

And now what remains for such a character? Life remains, and a fairly full, rich life after all. The Reserve prospered, land became valuable; Enoch Willoughby had much of it. While not wealthy, he became well-to-do. The house was enlarged and improved and filled with books. Gradually the man worked his way up step by step, from theory to theory, until he became quite an authority on things spiritual wherever found. His test-giving was mostly discontinued, but hope for him kept right on. His belief was so strong that it sometimes ran the risk of being offensive. He would not allow anyone, unchallenged, to speak of the beyond as "that bourne from whence no traveller returns," or to say of it "that we cannot know."

"We *can* know," he would say, and "travellers *do* return from that bourne," and then, if you were not careful, you would get a repetition of the corn-crib vision.

He was a most singular old gentleman, was Enoch Willoughby, the oddest one, perhaps, of all the Willoughbys that came West.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 766 772 8

